

ESBURG (AP) — Nelson Mandela was vapid in a short procedure at improving his vision. The 76-year-old South African leader, who had a cataract in his right eye, underwent a laser procedure to remove it. The procedure was successful. The 76-year-old South African leader, who had a cataract in his right eye, underwent a laser procedure to remove it. The procedure was successful. The 76-year-old South African leader, who had a cataract in his right eye, underwent a laser procedure to remove it. The procedure was successful.

turns 48

TON (AP) — Bill Clinton turned 48 on Sunday. He wished to pass his 48th birthday with a health care reform bill that would allow him to take a sabbatical from the White House. Clinton said he was glad to be 48 and that he was looking forward to the challenges ahead. He said he was looking forward to the challenges ahead. He said he was looking forward to the challenges ahead. He said he was looking forward to the challenges ahead.

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FP1 — Andrew ... biography of ... Wales ... became a ... book ... which should ... November ... mass ... newspaper ... the book ... Q.M. ... would coincide ... of ... husband ... Charles ... broadcast ... in which ... Morton ... claims to ... of Diana ... and ... secret ... behind ... and ... endeavours ... on the ... semi-detached ... first ... Morton ... was in ... painted a ... as a ... who had ... problems.

Syria, Turkey, Iran discuss Kurds

DAMASCUS (AP) — Turkey, Iran and Syria held talks here Sunday focusing on moves to counter Kurdish attempts to gain greater autonomy in the region and stem inner-Kurdish fighting in northern Iraq. The three neighbouring countries' foreign ministers, M. M. Soyars of Turkey, Ali Akbar Velayati of Iran and Farouk Al Sharaa of Syria, were scheduled to have one day of meetings. Mr. Soyars told reporters before the meeting that "the main issue we have to concentrate on is the situation in northern Iraq." He said all three governments wanted to see a halt to the inner-Kurdish strife that has beset the autonomous Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq and reportedly left scores dead. Several attempts at a ceasefire in recent months have apparently failed to end clashes. "We have a common interest: the ending of this fighting," said Mr. Soyars. He added that "our approach to the ending of this fighting is different from the approach of others," he said, without elaborating. Turkish diplomatic sources in Damascus also said Ankara's intensification of a bloody crackdown on the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) is high on the agenda.

Jordan Times

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King: Decision on ties with Palestinians only after they gain their democratic rights

Hashemite links with Jerusalem predate the establishment of Jordan and Israel

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein has said that it was premature to say anything about the future relations between Jordan and the Palestinian territories. "First the Palestinians should gain their democratic rights and afterwards we will see what we can do. So let us leave it to time to settle this problem, and we will respect the free choice of the Palestinians regardless of what decision they take," King Hussein said in an interview with the German Der Spiegel magazine.

The King said that the special relations binding the Hashemite family to Jerusalem and the holy shrines there date back to the era before the establishment of Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan, and that the Washington Declaration only affirms this reality rather than establishing it.

'Jordan seeks just peace'

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein, the Supreme Commander of the Jordanian Armed Forces, stressed Sunday that Jordan was seeking to achieve a just and durable peace acceptable to future generations. Addressing a meeting of senior officers at the Royal Jordanian Air Force held at the Air Force headquarters, the King said: "We are now at the threshold of a new era in which we will be in need of our Air Force and the Armed Forces which must be well aware of its duty and responsibility in the coming stage."

His Majesty King Hussein said that Jordan was seeking to achieve a just and durable peace acceptable to future generations. He said that Jordan was seeking to achieve a just and durable peace acceptable to future generations. He said that Jordan was seeking to achieve a just and durable peace acceptable to future generations. He said that Jordan was seeking to achieve a just and durable peace acceptable to future generations.



His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday addresses Royal Jordanian Air Force officers (Armed Forces photo)

Majali: No tension with PLO

Jordan-PLO talks open in an air of goodwill

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian and Palestinian officials began meetings here Sunday after months of suspended coordination between the two sides with a new spirit of goodwill that Jordanian officials hope will spill over positively into their specialised economic, political, administrative and security talks.

Ahmad Bayoud Al Tamimi, the head of the Palestinian side to the Israeli-Palestinian coordination committee, Jamil Tarifi. Speaking to reporters after a round of talks Sunday morning, Dr. Majali said he hoped for "pragmatism in addressing the serious issues so that we are able to achieve our objectives."

Dr. Majali denied that there was "tension" as such between the Palestinian and Jordanian sides, but he said there was "difference in opinion sometimes over a particular subject."

There is no tension between the two sides," Dr. Majali said. "We are brothers... sometimes there is a difference in opinion over a particular subject, but it doesn't turn into tension, because tension would hurt both sides."

Palestinian police kill Gaza youth

GAZA (R) — Palestinian police in the Gaza Strip shot dead a 15-year-old boy returning from a wedding apparently by accident, Palestinian sources and Israel said Sunday. The radio said Salah Al Sharaa was shot during a Rafah refugee camp, after police stopped a car carrying youngsters from a wedding. Palestinian sources said the shooting appeared to be an accident. The police commander in Rafah told community leaders all seven members of the police patrol had been detained pending an investigation. The mayor of Rafah complained by telegram to Yasser Arafat.

Arafat, Mubarak discuss self-rule

ALEXANDRIA (AFP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak examined problems hampering self-rule at talks here Sunday on the eve of a last PLO-Israeli push to clinch a deal on an early transfer of powers on the West Bank. Mr. Arafat arrived in Egypt Sunday from Tunis, where he met PLO officials at his former headquarters to review the political and economic problems facing self-rule (see page 12). The PLO leader's talks with Mr. Mubarak in the port city of Alexandria were aimed at removing "obstacles hindering the Palestinian authority's work in Gaza and Jericho, and issues related to international aid meant for the authority," a Palestinian official said.

21 people killed in Tunisian rail crash

TUNIS (AP) — A weekend collision between two passenger trains chugging towards each other on the same track killed at least 21 people and injured 89, officials said Sunday. The latest report on the Saturday accident raised the death toll by five. The trains collided near the eastern coastal city of Sousse, about 145 kilometres southeast of Tunis in the middle of the afternoon. Numerous cars were derailed by the shock. The injured were being treated at two hospitals, in Sousse and Monastir, authorities said. Full details of the accident have been scarce, and it was not immediately known what train was at fault. The Tunisian train system, a relic from the country's colonial past, is expensive but outmoded.

Row over arms delays self-rule corridor opening

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — A row over Palestinians carrying weapons through Israel has delayed the opening of passages between the new self-rule areas of Gaza and Jericho, Palestinian and Israeli security officials said Sunday.

The first of four secure routes between the Gaza Strip and West Bank enclave of Jericho was to have opened on Sunday. But Israel objects to Palestinians keeping their weapons as they cross the Jewish state.

The main obstacle is that Israel does not want PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) leaders, their body guards, senior policemen or security officials to carry arms while using the safe routes," a senior Palestinian security official said.

Under the May autonomy accord Israel guaranteed safe passage during daylight for people and vehicles with permits across the roughly 50 kilometres of Israeli territory separating Gaza from the southern end of the West Bank.

Israel was supposed to secure the use of safe passages between Jericho and Gaza once self-rule was implemented, but they keep delaying it," the Palestinian security official said.

"We have not agreed on details yet because Israel says it has its own interpretation of the accord."

He said the accord states that "special arrangements will apply with respect to passage of Palestinian leaders, senior Palestinian authority officials and distinguished personalities."

Palestinians, Israel plan to buy oil from Iraq, report says

KUWAIT (AP) — The Palestinians are negotiating a deal with Iraq to purchase oil at discount prices despite the U.N. embargo on Baghdad, a Kuwaiti newspaper reported Sunday.

The Al Siyassah daily quoted a Palestinian source close to the economic cooperation negotiations with Israel as saying the Palestinian self-rule authority wants to buy 25,000 barrels of oil a day from Iraq.

The amount would be added to the 50,000 barrels a day Jordan gets from Iraq with the approval of the U.N. committee overseeing enforcement of the embargo, imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

He said the U.N. Sanctions Committee overseeing the embargo is likely to approve the arrangement. "They don't seem concerned because the amount is so small and the price is so low," the source said.

The source, who was reached by telephone in Amman, said Yasser Arafat's self-rule administration would pay \$9 a barrel for the oil, trucked in by an Iraqi-Jordanian transport company and processed at Jordan's Al Zarka refinery.

The source said the deal would save the authority \$195 million a year by not having to purchase petroleum products on the more expensive Israeli market.

The source repeated assertions made in Israeli newspapers of secret contacts in Europe between Israel and Iraq over a deal involving oil sales and diplomatic ties. The deal would allow Baghdad, which is desperately seeking an end to the economically devastating embargo, to win favour in the West.

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Carlos capture unleashes anti-Sudan media frenzy

CAIRO (Agencies) — The arrest of Carlos the Jackal has presented the Egyptian media with a golden opportunity to heap accusations on Khartoum over Sudan's alleged links to "international terrorism."

For the past five days the media has had a field day, joining forces to highlight the "special ties" between Carlos and the Islamic junta led by General Omar al-Bashir.

Egypt accuses Sudan of training Islamic extremists on its territory and relations between the two countries have also been severely strained over a border dispute.

"The Sudanese regime, not content with terrorising its people (...) also thought it could terrorise the whole world by exporting terrorism through mercenaries who are trained to 'stray and to kill'."

He added that Carlos had arrived in Sudan from Beirut at the end of 1992.

Sudan's call to the United States to strike it has been blacklisted of countries supporting "terrorism" after it handed Carlos over to France was dismissed in the press here as "nonsense."

And the U.S. decision to ignore the demand, despite the international acclaim for Carlos' capture, was warmly welcomed in the Egyptian capital.

State television broadcast four times on Friday a secret recording to Carlos apparently living it up at a party in Khartoum.

The hidden camera had caught Carlos "surrounded by beautiful women at parties where the alcohol flowed freely," the commentator

said. It stressed that this "contradicts the Sudanese regime, which claims to enforce Sharia" or Islamic law, under which alcohol is strictly forbidden.

Shortly after the arrest of Carlos the daily Al-Ahram Al-Masri wrote: "Sudan has to stop sheltering all the terrorists and not just one," if it wanted the West to recognise it and be taken off the "terrorism" blacklist.

It also charged that Sudan had given refuge to a Saudi militant fundamentalist, Osama bin Laden, suspected of funding extremist groups operating in Egypt.

In 1992 Muslim militants launched a violent campaign to topple the secular government of President Hosni Mubarak, in which about 400 people have been killed so far.

The daily Al-Ahram published an editorial Friday by Ibrahim Nafee, who is close to Mr. Mubarak, saying that "according to recent and precise information, Iran forced Sudan to extradite Carlos to France."

The move was a trade-off for the "extradition of two Iranian leaders by France to Iran."

In December France extradited to Iran two Iranian nationals wanted by Switzerland to face charges for the murder of an Iranian opposition leader, Kazem Rajavi.

The rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has accused France of providing Khartoum with military assistance in exchange for Carlos, and charged that Sudan "remains one of the nerve-centres of modern terrorism."

But Sudan has strongly de-

nied that any deal was done to clinch the arrest, and said the extradition was in "observance of international conventions."

Carlos was arrested while undergoing liposuction to remove fat from around his waist, the Sunday Observer of London reported.

The newspaper quoted a Sudanese doctor in Cairo as saying Carlos had been admitted to a private hospital in Khartoum and that French agents seized him after he was rendered unconscious by anaesthetic.

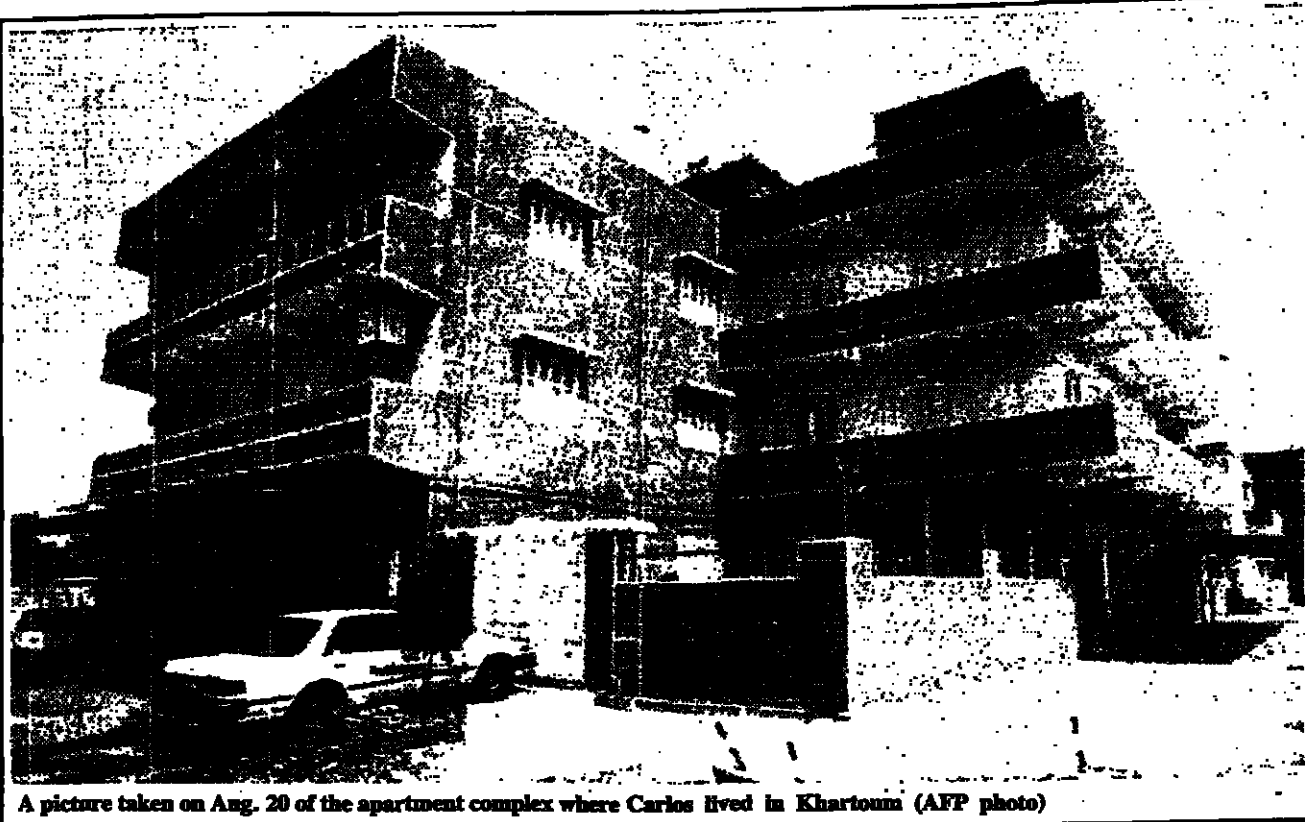
Carlos, whose real name is Illich Ramirez Sanchez, was arrested last week in Sudan and extradited to France to stand trial for attacks authorities allege he carried out during his left-wing guerrilla campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s.

The Observer said the Sudanese had been admitted to a hospital run by Sudan's National Islamic Front for liposuction, a common cosmetic operation in the Sudanese vacuum fat out from under the skin.

But once he was anaesthetised, French agents took him away. Authorities have not said how Carlos was arrested and there has been intense speculation about who told authorities where he was and how the French government persuaded the Sudanese to extradite him.

Lawyers for the Venezuelan-born Carlos say he was arrested illegally and that he was drugged.

France and Sudan have repeatedly denied any deal in the capture of Carlos, who bombed his way to a gruesome notoriety in the 1970s and 1980s.



A picture taken on Aug. 20 of the apartment complex where Carlos lived in Khartoum (AFP photo)

Iraq is ready to agree on U.N. deal

ISLAMABAD (R) — Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al-Sahaf told Pakistan on Saturday that Baghdad was ready to agree on a package to have the U.N. Gulf crisis trade blockade lifted, the Pakistani government said.

Mr. Sahaf, who is visiting certain Security Council member states to canvass support for ending sanctions, made his comment during talks with Pakistani Foreign Minister Asif Ahmad Ali, the government said in a statement.

But the statement gave no details of the package. Mr. Ali said Iraq had made

what he called appreciable progress in implementing Security Council resolutions.

But the statement quoted him as referring to "difficulties that persisted in the Security Council on the question of a clear recognition of Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity, recognition of the borders and the concern about the Kuwaitis missing in action."

He quoted Mr. Sahaf as saying that Iraq was "ready to agree on a package within the framework of the Security Council resolutions that would meet all these concerns."

The Security Council imposed the trade blockade shortly after Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. It has linked its lifting to Iraqi compliance with the 1991 Gulf war ceasefire terms, including scrapping its weapons on mass destruction.

Pakistan, which sent 11,000 troops to help defend Saudi Arabia as part of a U.S.-led coalition that drove Iraqi troops from Kuwait, has observed the Gulf crisis trade blockade.

Mr. Ali said it had adopted a "constructive approach in the Security Council in order to alleviate the sufferings of

the Iraqi people and to bring stability to the region."

He said Pakistan would "favourably examine the package proposal when it is made."

The statement said Mr. Sahaf briefed Mr. Ali on Iraqi steps to implement the various Security Council resolutions, "including Iraq's readiness to comply with the requirements of long-term monitoring" of its weapons systems — at one time a stumbling block.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman said Mr. Sahaf might also meet Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Arab-American group denounces reported embassy moves to Jerusalem, calls for action

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An Arab-American lobbying group on Sunday denounced reported moves by three Latin American countries to shift their embassies to Jerusalem and called on Arab countries to seek an urgent U.N. Security Council debate on the issue.

The Jordan office of the Washington-based American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), in a statement issued here, also called for sanctions against the governments of Bolivia, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic if they moved their embassies to Jerusalem in an explicit recognition of Israel's claim to the Holy City as its "eternal, indivisible capital."

The status of Jerusalem, holy to Muslims, Christians and Jews, is the most difficult issue facing the Arabs and Israel in the 34-month-old

peace process.

While Israel claims the city as its capital and has vowed never to relinquish its grip on the city, the Palestinians see the Arab eastern part of Jerusalem as the capital of their future independent state.

Jordan, which plays a historic religious role vis-a-vis the Islamic shrines in Jerusalem, supports the Palestinian quest for political sovereignty over the Holy City and favours a multi-religious approach to the issue of the holy shrines of the three religions there.

Very few countries recognise Israel's claim to Jerusalem as its capital and refuse to move their missions to the Holy City.

Even the U.S. Israel's guardian ally, does not accept the Jewish state's claim.

Reports said last week that Bolivia, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic had come under Israeli pressure to move the missions or face

the closure of Israeli missions in their capitals.

The ADC statement said: "The American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, regional office for the Middle East in Amman, condemns and rejects outright this measure and believes that it constitutes a blatant breach of the U.N. resolutions on the status of Jerusalem."

"The ADC warns that moving the embassies to Jerusalem would only add complications to a very sensitive issue and jeopardises the entire peace process."

"The unilateral measure taken by these three countries defies all U.N. resolutions on Jerusalem."

"The ADC calls upon the governments of Bolivia, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic not to yield to the Israeli blackmail and to abide by U.N. resolutions."

"The ADC wishes to state to these three countries that

their measure constitutes a violation of rights of Arab Palestinians, Muslims and Christians in the city of Jerusalem."

"The ADC warns that the Arabs should never have differences on the issues of Palestine and Jerusalem and the Palestinian people's legitimate rights in this regard. Therefore, the ADC urges the Arab countries to move promptly and call for the convening of an emergency U.N. Security Council session to stop these three countries from violating the related U.N. resolutions on Jerusalem and to impose appropriate sanctions, including economic sanctions, on the three countries should they insist on their illegal move."

"ADC further calls upon the concerned U.N. agencies to interfere immediately to stop this serious breach of the international legitimacy."

Suspected mastermind of Higgins' abduction killed

BEIRUT (AP) — The suspected mastermind of the fatal kidnapping of U.S. Marine Colonel William R. Higgins in 1988 has died in a mysterious car accident in Lebanon, a magazine reported.

The Arabic-language Al-Shiraa weekly quoted unnamed knowledgeable sources in Lebanon as saying Munzer Hassan Rammal perished in what "seemed to be a pre-arranged accident to get rid of him."

The report could not be independently verified. Al-Shiraa gained fame in 1986 for revealing the Iran-contra affair in which President Ronald Reagan sold weapons to Iran to win the release of U.S. hostages, then channel-

led the proceeds to contra rebels in Nicaragua.

Rammal was a security chief of the Iranian-backed Hizbollah, or Party of God, in South Lebanon when Higgins was abducted Feb. 17, 1988 near the southern city of Tyre.

Al-Shiraa said the Lebanese Shiite was killed after "Iranian security officials learned of contacts between Rammal and Islamic quarters in the Iranian capital maintaining links with Western enemies."

"Iran was apprehensive that information about Higgins' murder could leak from Rammal," the magazine said.

Higgins, was chief of a 76-member observer force

attached to U.N. peacekeeping troops in South Lebanon.

The group that kidnapped him, the Organisation of the Oppressed on Earth, released a videotape July 31, 1989, that purportedly showed Higgins dangling from a makeshift gallows.

The group said he had been executed in retaliation for Israel's abduction of a Hizbollah-linked Shiite cleric, Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid, in South Lebanon July 29, 1989.

U.S. intelligence reports have said Higgins died earlier while under torture.

Al-Shiraa said Rammal was taken to Tehran, along with other Hizbollah activists linked to the hostage-taking of

the 1980s, after the longest-held and last U.S. hostage, Terry Anderson, was freed in December 1991.

Mr. Anderson was chief Middle East correspondent for the Associated Press when he was abducted in Beirut March 16, 1985.

His release signalled the end of the hostage-taking saga that characterised the latter years of Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war.

More than 90 Westerners were kidnapped between 1983 and 1991. Some were freed after a few days, several died in captivity and a handful escaped. Most were released under deals negotiated by their governments or U.N. mediators.

U.N. envoy seeks aid for Palestinian economy

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — One year after the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace deal was secretly signed in Oslo, the Norwegian middleman in the talks appealed on Saturday for rapid world aid to help Palestinians cement self-rule in Gaza and Jericho.

Terje Roed Larsen, a former adviser to the Norwegian foreign ministry and the newly-appointed U.N. special coordinator in the Middle East, told Reuters that poverty was the worst enemy of the peace accord.

He said disbursement of donor funds in Gaza and Jericho, which came under self-rule in May, had been too slow. International donors have pledged \$2.4 billion to help the PLO develop and assert control over the areas.

"This political settlement will fail if the economic (problems) are not solved," Mr. Roed Larsen said.

"My message to the donors is that we have to fight on three battle fronts to keep the self-rule experiment from collapsing, the political front, the economic and the general welfare."

The donors have sought guarantees of transparency and accountability from the PLO to ensure their money would be used properly in development projects.

"One of the problems facing the self-rule deal has been the bridging mechanism between the donors and the Palestinian recipients, and it is very complicated," Mr. Roed Larsen said.

He said one of the major tasks of his U.N. office was to work with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to make separate contacts with the donors and the Palestinian self-rule authority.

"My office has been setting up contracts with donors that are easy to understand, where the UNDP guarantees transparency and accountability with the donors and then we negotiate with the Palestinian side," Mr. Roed Larsen said.

"So donors put the money in the UNDP account and it goes to the Palestinian authority's account the next day, and we monitor projects," he said.

Since his arrival in Gaza in July, Mr. Roed Larsen has managed to persuade donors to start pumping money for job-creating projects in Gaza Strip such as a \$19 million clean-up expected to generate 15,000 job opportunities.

Mr. Roed Larsen said he came to live in Gaza Strip for the five-year interim period of self-rule to help ensure the experiment is a success.

He has held extensive talks with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on facilitating the work of U.N. bodies which support the Palestinian economy.

Mr. Roed Larsen also said Sunday this year's Nobel Peace Prize should be shared by two Palestinian and two Israeli leaders.

"(PLO leader Yasser) Arafat, (Israeli Prime Minister) Yitzhak Rabin, (Israeli Foreign Minister) Shimon Peres, and 'Abu Mazen' (PLO Executive Committee member Mahmoud Abbas) should share the peace prize," he said.

"This is the peace of the brave and bravery applied equally to these four."

Cost of Turkey's Kurdish war scales new heights

ANKARA (R) — A pro-Kurdish newspaper, citing that it said were internal Turkish government figures, painted a devastating picture on Saturday of the human and economic cost of the 10-year guerrilla war with Kurdish separatists.

The Istanbul daily Ozgur Ulke, quoting what it said was a report by the political department of Turkey's National Security Council, said almost 22,000 people, double most estimates, have been killed in fighting in the largely Kurdish southeast.

Many of those killed in the hit-and-run war were civilians, it said.

Entitled "The Kurdish Problem," the study also put the cost of a decade of war, including lost economic activity in the impoverished region, at \$179 billion, the newspaper said.

Nevertheless, the document suggested no let-up in the iron-fist approach: "There is no turning back from this stage, and the struggle against the (separatists) will continue."

There was no way to confirm the authenticity of the study, and Ozgur Ulke — which is close to the banned separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) — said only that it came from a source on the National Security Council.

Officials at the security council, a powerful advisory body dominated by top military commanders, could not be reached for comment.

Publication of the figures appeared to be part of a campaign to pressure the government to abandon its

hardline tactics. Earlier this week PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan marked the 10th anniversary of the Middle East's deadliest war with an offer of a ceasefire and eventual talks.

According to the report, 11,750 soldiers, police, village guards and their families have died in fighting between the PKK's military wing and the security forces — far higher than public statements by the government.

Of these more than 4,000 were village guards, selected and paid by the state, family members and other civilians.

At the same time, it put the separatists' losses at 6,443 PKK fighters and another 3,330 civilian sympathisers, who the document said were branded as "terrorists" after their deaths.

Some 960 villages have been emptied, wholly or in part, in the army's campaign to deprive the PKK fighters of sanctuary among the general population. Another 39 villages have been the target of army attacks, or "operations."

Government officials have put the annual cost of the counter-insurgency at \$7 billion a year, with total losses at around 12,500 people.

With limited access to the remote fighting and a full-scale propaganda war waged by both sides, it is impossible to assess the true extent of casualties or damage.

Nevertheless, there were signs that Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, who has vowed to finish off the PKK, and her coalition partners are having second thoughts.



Tansu Ciller

News accounts of a visit this week to the southeast by Ms. Ciller and senior ministers said the government was prepared to reassess elements of its get-tough policy.

Interior Minister Nihat Metne was quoted by Hurriyet newspaper as saying the evacuation drive had been abused. "Of course there are some villages where the authorities have gone a bit too far," he said.

Ms. Ciller's deputy, Murat Karayalcin, pledged to review the policy upon his return to Ankara, the newspaper said.

The Associated Press adds: Some 17 million Kurds live in Turkey, Iran, Syria and the three governments have been wary of the U.N.-backed experiment in Kurdish autonomy which followed the 1991 Gulf war.

The Iraqi Kurdish enclave is protected by U.N. guards and U.S., British and French warplanes based in Turkey.

Full statehood for the three million Kurds in northern Iraq could encourage their brethren elsewhere to push for greater self-rule or independence.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:00 Pif Et Hercule
17:10 Beaumanoir
17:30 Musiques Sans Frontiers
18:30 News in French
19:00 News in Hebrew
19:15 The Weekly Sport Magazine
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Home Free
21:10 A Galactic Odyssey
22:00 News in English
22:20 Matrix
23:10 No Job For A Lady

PRAYER TIMES

06:36 Fajr
06:59 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:39 Dhuhr
16:17 'Asr
19:19 Maghrib
20:42 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622666
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772561.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 625236.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 664195
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Hot weather conditions will prevail with winds northeasterly moderate. In Agaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp. 22/37
Amman 25/41
Djarsa 20/39
Jordan Valley 24/40
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 35, Agaba 39 Humidity readings: Amman 31 per cent, Agaba 20 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Ghaleb Zawalidh 736011
Dr. Khalid Asfour 666873
Dr. Adnan Zaidat 89140
Dr. Fakher Bebeisi 663412
Firas pharmacy 661912
Fordous pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 637055
Naroush pharmacy 626272
Al Salim pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmechani pharmacy 637660
Naroush pharmacy 626272
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Akram Momani 248793
Alqods pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Yahya Tarifi 981520
Khalifah pharmacy 985417.

EMERGENCIES

Food
Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 751211
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 863930
Public Security Department 63021
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (direct dial assistance) 821
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 751211
Radio Jordan 771111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussain Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Ann. 6442816
Abdali Maternity, J. Ann. 6442412
Jabal Amman Maternity 636140
Malhas, J. Amman 661714
Palestine, Shamsi 661714
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 848945
Al-Musader Hospital 666127/79
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/79
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Islamic, Al-Madajra 7710123
Al-Basir, J. Asrafah 7511126
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674135
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital
Jabal Amman Maternity 636140
Palestine, Shamsi 661714
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 848945
Al-Musader Hospital 666127/79
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/79
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Palestine, Shamsi 661714
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 848945
Al-Musader Hospital 666127/79
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/79
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Islamic, Al-Madajra 7710123
Al-Basir, J. Asrafah 7511126
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674135
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital
Jabal Amman Maternity 636140
Palestine, Shamsi 661714
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 848945
Al-Musader Hospital 666127/79
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/79
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Islamic, Al-Madajra 7710123
Al-Basir, J. Asrafah 7511126
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674135

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

09:00 Damascus (RJ)
09:30 Jeddah (RJ)
10:00 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:15 Riyadh (RJ)
11:00 New Delhi (RJ)
11:00 Bangkok (RJ)
11:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
12:00 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
12:30 Sana'a (RJ)
12:30 Doha (RJ)
12:30 Moscow (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

11:00 Khartoum (SD)
11:30 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
15:00 Sana'a (RJ)
17:00 Rome (AZ)
20:20 Cairo (MS)
21:30 Dubai (EM)
21:45 Beirut (add) (ML)
01:30 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:45 Beirut (RJ)
12:20 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:30 Sana'a (RJ)
13:15 London (RJ)
13:25 Frankfurt, Copenhagen (RJ)
14:35 Cairo (RJ)
15:00 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
15:00 Dhahran (RJ)
15:00

U.N. envoy seeks aid for Palestinian economy

Cabinet names ministerial panel to draft speech from the Throne

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Sunday approved the setting up of a ministerial committee to draft the speech from the Throne, to be delivered by His Majesty King Hussein at the opening of Parliament in October.

The committee will be headed by Deputy Prime Minister Thouran Hindawi and will include as members the ministers of Education, Information, State for Prime Minister Affairs, Planning, Finance, Interior, State for Foreign Affairs, Industry and Trade as well as Culture.

The Cabinet also approved the appointment of Bashir Taher Jaghbir as secretary general of the Ministry of Public Works and Housing.

Mr. Jaghbir was director general of the Government Tenders Department.

The Council of Ministers also approved a recommendation by the Cabinet's Development Council to set up a national development committee. The committee will include as members several professors from Jordanian universities.

The recommendation was first issued by Minister of Water and Irrigation Saleh Irsheidat stressing the need to set up a team of specialists in geological and geotechnical fields to monitor quality control issues when carrying out projects and to inspect the geological features that might affect these projects.

The Council of Ministers also approved an amendment to the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) employees systems and another amendment to the allowances system of the Social Security Corporation (SSC).

The amendment provides for granting the corporation's employees a 10 per cent raise provided that the raise will not be less than JD 10.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King receives cable from Senegal president

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday received a cable from Senegalese President Abdou Diouf congratulating him on Prophet Mohammad's birthday. Mr. Diouf wished the King good health and happiness and the Jordanian people further progress and prosperity.

Royal Decree approves JIC chief appointment

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree Sunday was issued approving a Cabinet decision appointing Mohammad Ali Saad Al Batayneh as director general of the Jordan Investment Corporation (JIC) as of Aug. 1, 1994.

Festival preparations

Her Royal Highness Princess Alia Bint Al Hussein, president of the Royal Jordanian Arabian Thoroughbred Society, and chairperson of the Arab Society of Arabian Horses, Sunday chairs a meeting for participants in the Fifth Arabian Horse Festival which will be held in Jordan. Participating in the festival are several Arab and foreign countries. Princess Alia stressed the importance of providing the necessary care of Arabian horses and reviewed the activities of the festival. She said seven Arab countries in addition to Jordan will participate in the Sept. 20-24 event which will include races and a showjumping championship. Princess Alia said the festival will include a 43-kilometre marathon race which will start from Al Harraneh Palace in Marwanagar and end at Amra Palace. The festival will be held in cooperation with the ministries of Youth, Tourism and Antiquities, Agriculture, Public Works and Housing, and Yarmouk University and the Greater Amman Municipality.

RJ prepares to resume Aden flights

AMMAN (Petra) — Royal Jordanian (RJ) has made arrangements to resume flights to Aden airport in Yemen as soon as the airport is re-opened, an official source at the national air carrier said Sunday. The official said the airport, closed during the Yemeni civil war, is expected to re-open next week. The source said that RJ was one of the first airlines to resume flights to the Sana'a airport after the end of the civil war.

Factory management programme starts

AMMAN (Petra) — Institute of Public Administration Director General Zuhair Al Kayed Sunday opened at Amra Hotel in Amman a programme on projects and financial management for workers in Arab cement factories and companies. Dr. Kayed said participants in the week-long programme will discuss various issues related to managing projects, international standards and specifications, planning and financial analysis.

Jordan to attend conference in India

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will participate in an international conference to be organised by the Indian Council on International Affairs, due to start in India Aug. 24. Participants in the three-day conference will discuss issues related to the United Nations peace-keeping efforts around the world and economic systems. Jordan will be represented at the conference by Vice-President of the International Affairs Society Taher Hikmat.

Orphans summer camp ends

AMMAN (Petra) — A summer camp for orphaned children organised by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the Pamp Mission in Amman concluded Sunday at UNRWA's Teachers Training College. About 265 orphaned Palestinian refugees took part in the activities of the two-week camp. It aimed to train the participants on the use of computers, arts, handicrafts, science, taekwondo and music. The camp is held annually by the YWCA since it was launched 23 years ago.

Special computer training course opens

AMMAN (Petra) — A training course on the uses of computers in managing projects started at the Jordan Management Institute. The course, in which several directors of government and private sector institutions are participating, aims to acquaint the participants with means of managing and distributing resources, drawing plans and timetables and cost calculations through the use of computers.

Sudanese team visits educational centre

AMMAN (Petra) — A Sudanese delegation Sunday visited the National Centre for Educational Research and Development to get familiarised with the centre's experiment in establishing educational database systems and their uses, in order to establish similar systems in Sudan. The delegation was received by Centre Director Victor Billeh who briefed the members on the duties of the centre. The delegation's four-day visit to Jordan comes as part of existing cooperation between the centre and the Sudanese Ministry of Education and aims to pave the way for launching a joint project under which the centre will offer technical assistance to the Sudanese Ministry of Education. The programme is expected to last for two years.

Social education programme begins

MADABA (Petra) — The Bani Hamida Local Development Centre Sunday launched a social education programme to benefit trainees enrolled at other courses in the centre. Fifteen women are participating in the programme which aims to educate them on health, religious and social issues in addition to the role of the centre and the Ministry of Social Development. As part of the activities of the programme, the participants will hear lectures and receive practical training on voluntary work and will be familiarised with the role of educated and qualified women in developing the society.

Planned women's society endorses its system

DEIR ABEE SAEED (Petra) — The constituent assembly of Al Koura District Women's Society held a meeting Sunday and endorsed the basic system of the society. Constituent assembly member Rima Tashman expressed hope that the system will be approved by the concerned authorities soon to enable the society to commence work since the district thus far does not have a women's society. Ms. Tashman said the society aims to help women in establishing income-generating projects and to help the handicapped in the district.

Polluted salt destroyed in Deir Abee Saeed

DEIR ABEE SAEED (Petra) — The Deir Abee Saeed Health Department Sunday destroyed 750 kilograms of polluted salt after the quantity was unfit for consumption. The department said samples of salt purchased by bakery owners in the Deir Abee Saeed district from Al Azraq Cooperative Society were examined at its laboratories after complaints by the bakers. It said its personnel are continuing to take other samples from the various areas of the district to check if there are still other polluted quantities. The department said the bakery owners will be compensated for all destroyed quantities.

Sharia Sciences course to start

AMMAN (Petra) — A three-day conference on "Islamic Sharia Sciences at Universities — Reality and Aspiration" Tuesday will open at the Jordanian Arabic Language Academy. The conference, organised by the International Islamic Thought Institute, the Islamic Studies and Research Centre and the universities of Jordan, Yarmouk, and Mu'tah, will focus on the need to develop sharia sciences and the relations of these sciences to the Arabic language and humanitarian and social sciences. Renowned professors and scholars from Jordan and other Arab and Islamic countries will participate in the conference.

Parents need to be educated on birth control, says minister

Seminar opens to analyse fertility data

AMMAN (Petra) — Labour Minister Khaled Ghazawi Sunday called for educating parents on birth control, with a view to protecting mothers' health.

Addressing the opening session of a five-day seminar on analysing fertility data in Jordan, the minister said that the population growth in the Kingdom exceeds the natural growth in the country, and that was largely due to the high fertility rate on the one hand and the waves of migration of people into the country on the other.

He said that these facts ought to be taken into account by planners and decision makers in all matters related to population and development.

Birth control methods which should be in line with social and Islamic traditions are required not only to safeguard mothers' health but also to save the Jordanian society, added Mr. Ghazawi.

The minister also called for protecting society from chronic diseases which cost a great deal to treat and which drain the country's resources adding that the education of families can help achieve this goal.

Noting that population growth was linked to development in the social and economic fields, the minister said fertility is considered the most important element affecting both population growth and socio-economic development.



Khaled Ghazawi

Fifteen participants representing several government ministries and public organisations are taking part in the meeting which was organised by the National Population Commission (NPC) in cooperation with the U.N. Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA).

Working papers to be reviewed at the meeting cover population issues measuring fertility rates, strategies and policies related to population in Jordan.

Nabih Salameh, the NPC secretary general, addressed the meeting outlining the commission's activities at the national level.

He said the commission was addressing questions related to spreading public awareness concerning population issues and development, with the purpose of helping the country link population growth with development requirements.

Interior minister outlines benefits, problems of decentralisation

ZARQA (Petra) — The application of decentralisation policies in the Kingdom faces three problems: upgrading and modernising laws and regulations, financing, and recruiting qualified personnel, said Interior Minister Salameh Hammad Sunday.

Addressing the opening session of a workshop on the future of decentralisation in Jordan, Mr. Hammad said the Interior Ministry was trying to deal with these issues in cooperation with the ministries of Planning, and Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment.

Through decentralisation, Jordan hopes to achieve a qualitative improvement in public administration services, cut red tape and avoid complications and routine work in public offices, Mr. Hammad said at the opening of the meeting which was sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

When the government embarked on applying the decentralisation system, many people showed apprehension; but the picture is now clear and the Ministry of Interior has started drafting budgets for the various governorates under the system, said the minister.

Noting that Zarqa was chosen as the first governorate where decentralisation is to be applied, Mr. Hammad said that the city of Zarqa has been the main recipient of population waves after Amman, especially people returning from the Gulf, and it has been facing many problems related to reorganisation and planning as well as issues connected with state-owned land and environment-related problems.

The minister said that the Zarqa Governorate has also been facing enormous population growth, random factory building and lack of



Salameh Hammad

proper services, stressing that the experience of applying decentralisation in Zarqa first

will benefit the other governorates.

Resident Representative of the United Nations in Jordan Othman Hashem addressed the workshop noting that his office was providing help to the government of Jordan through cooperation with the Ministry of Planning to help it apply the decentralisation system which entails giving more authority to local governments.

Stressing that the UNDP will continue to provide the necessary assistance to the government Mr. Hashem said the UNDP will sponsor efforts for training personnel to qualify to administer the new system.

Later, Mr. Hammad inaugurated the Hashemeh Multipurpose Complex which cost JD120,000. He inspected a display of photos which related the story of the Great Arab Revolt and the development of the Jordanian Armed Forces.



NEW TOUR GUIDES: Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities Secretary General Ghassan Al Mifleh Sunday presents a graduate of a three-month tourist guide training course with a diploma at a ceremony held at the University of Jordan where the training took place. Seventy-five students were graduated.

Police arrest woman suspected of murder

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Mafragha 28-year-old woman who is suspected of killing her husband on a ranch in Al Dejenah area between Irbid and Balama highways, according to Civil Defence Department (CDD) and police sources.

The authorities found the body of Jamil A.A. on the ranch, where he worked as the foreman, said the CDD without explaining how they were alerted.

The CDD report said that Jamil received several blows to the head with an iron bar, causing his immediate death. The report said that his wife, Hania A.F. was arrested by police shortly after the incident.

Authorities contacted by the Jordan Times Sunday evening would not reveal if the woman surrendered and why she was a suspect. A Mafragha police official told the Jordan Times that

police still do not know the real motive for the killing, but preliminary investigations revealed that "it is possible that the killing was the result of family problems."

Police gave no further details, and refused to release any other information. The body was taken to Princess Basma hospital for autopsy. Police said they are investigating the incident.

Also on Friday, a 50-year-old Ma'an man was listed in critical condition after he was stabbed by his son, police reports said.

The man, identified only by police as M.G.M., was stabbed several times in the chest and hands with a switch blade by his 17-year-old son, the report said.

The victim told police that his son came home drunk, started arguing with him, drew a blade and began stabbing him.

When police questioned the suspect, he denied stabbing his father.

WHAT'S GOING ON

PLAY

★ Children's play entitled "Long Live the Dead Sea" at the Royal Cultural Centre on 20:00.

NOVEL RECITAL

★ Novel recital by novelist Tal'at Shana'a at the Phoenix Gallery for Art and Culture at 20:00.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Children's school needs exhibition at the Amman International Auto Exhibition, Airport Road (12:00 noon-11:00 p.m.) (Tel. 714211).

★ Painting on copper exhibition by Mohammad Judi at the Phoenix Gallery for Art and Culture (Tel. 695291).

Phoenix Gallery for Art and Culture (Tel. 695291).

★ "The Child's World Festival 1994" (containing all children needs) at the World Exhibition Center, University Road (Tel. 643844).

★ Exhibition of painting by several Jordanian artists entitled "The Fact Between Paintings and Viewers As Viewed By Artist" at the Royal Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition of new paintings by Diana Shamouni at the Gallery, Jordan Inter-Continental Hotel (8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.).

★ Exhibition of oil paintings by Princess Wijdan Ali at the Balqa' Art Gallery in Fuhis (10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.) (Tel. 720677).

★ Exhibition of paintings by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at Orfali Art Gallery in Umm Uthelna (Tel. 826932).

PLO officials against amending charter

(Continued from page 12)

their role in anti-Israeli attacks would be allowed in the duration of a meeting.

In Geneva, Mr. Arafat met with the president of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan, on Saturday in an apparent attempt to repair relations soured by PLO support for Iraq in the Gulf war.

No details about the talks were immediately available but sources in Tunis said the PLO leader was seeking to persuade Sheikh Zayed, who is vacationing in the Swiss city, to resume transferring

taxes, deducted from the salaries of Palestinians working in the UAE, to the PLO.

The UAE stopped collections, which amounted to some \$9 million, last month. Arab diplomats in Abu Dhabi indicated this was because the Palestinians now have their own authority and can do their own collecting but other sources said the move followed Mr. Arafat's criticism of Arab states for not doing enough to support the struggling authority.

Mr. Arafat told reporters that he had had "important discussions" with Sheikh Zayed, but declined to divulge details.

Iraqi oil could flow again this spring

(Continued from page 1)

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Iraq-born cabinet ministers Moshe Shalal and Benyamin Ben Eliezer as both the architects and participants in talks with unnamed "Iraqi officials."

While these clandestine talks apparently go on between Iraqis and Israelis, Turkey is making headway in normalising relations with Iraq.

Last week the Turkish government announced that it was reopening the Habur border crossing with Iraq, closed since the U.N. imposed an embargo on Iraq in 1990 (See editorial comment, page 6).

national intermediary between Israel and Arab countries.

Mr. Aziz's visit to Morocco came days after Jordanian officials made public statements saying that no comprehensive peace in the region could be concluded without Iraq. Iraq responded by saying it would do its own diplomatic footwork and did not need Jordan to do talking on its behalf.

But the end result is the same, the analysts say. "If Iraq is interested in a dialogue with Israel it will probably happen anyway," Israeli press organs have singled out

Amman Cultural Meeting to review the criticism movement in Jordan

By Angham Tamimi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — As a curtain raiser to the Third Amman Cultural Meeting, "The Criticism Movement in Jordan," to be held today at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC), Secretary General of the Ministry of Culture Mohammad Naji Amareh held a press conference yesterday to explain several issues.

The four-day cultural meeting will include five topics: the criticism movement up to the 1950s; major trends in Jordan; major effects of the criticism movement in Jordan; cultural journalism and its role in developing literary criticism in Jordan; and finally, literary creativity and criticism in Jordan.

The target of this conference, Mr. Amareh said, is to look at criticism as it relates to all forms of literature.

The Ministry of Culture hoped to encourage all Arab and Jordanian universities to include criticism in their course curricula because it is considered a serious analytical



Ministry of Culture Secretary General Mohammad Naji Amareh Sunday briefs the press on the Third Amman Cultural Meeting (Photo by Hatim Ali)

art which will prepare students for future cultural activities.

The Jordanian critic has a distinguished rank among other Arab critics, so their work should be included in the universities' programmes.

"Their works, their views, their thoughts should be analysed and studied thoroughly," said Mr. Amareh.

Several Arab and Jordanian critics will participate in this meeting, including Ilias Khouri (Lebanon), Mubashir Musawi (Iraq), Ahmad Ibrahim Hawari (Egypt), Na'ima

Yafi (Syria), and Majed Samarah (Iraq) in addition to 11 Jordanian critics and six Jordanian literary persons who will talk about their life-achievement works.

According to Mr. Amareh, the participants were asked to present original research, and based on originality and subject importance, the Ministry of Culture will select several papers for publications as part of its documentation policy.

Mr. Amareh believes that the Arab culture is the last line of defence. He said with the Arab tradition, originality and modernisation we would fight, in other words with the pen not the sword.

Foreseeing possible scheduling difficulties, the meeting organisers printed no programme for the four-day event. Furthermore, as criticism is the topic of the day, the organisers looked even further and prepared a questionnaire to distribute during the final session in order to pinpoint, correct and avoid any snags in the programme in future meetings.

U.S. steps up pressure on Cuba

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — A day after pulling in a decades-old welcome mat for Cuban refugees, President Bill Clinton announced Saturday new measures to step up pressure on the Communist regime in Havana.

A statement said the United States was banning cash transfers by Cuban Americans to their former homeland, cutting off an important source of hard currency for the economically ailing country.

Other measures were stepped-up U.S. government radio broadcasts to the island, a cutback in charter flights between the countries and efforts to seek a harder international line on human rights abuses in Cuba.

"The solution to Cuba's many problems is not an uncontrolled exodus, it is freedom and democracy for Cuba," said the U.S. president, whose country has maintained an economic embargo against Havana for 32 years.

The new measures came amid criticism that Clinton was not being hard enough on Cuba's government while cracking down on refugees Friday and ending a 28-year-old policy of granting them quick and easy asylum here.

That move was an attempt to stem a growing influx of refugees, apparently encouraged by Havana in a continuing war of nerves that has

pitted Cuban leader Fidel Castro against nine U.S. presidents since 1959.

More than 2,600 asylum seekers crossed the treacherous Florida Straits in small boats and homemade rafts over the past week, the largest influx since the 1980 "Mariel boatlift" that brought in 125,000 over five months.

But despite the U.S. announcement that any Cuban picked up at sea would be sent for screening to the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo, Cuba, by 0145 GMT (Sunday), 861 Cuban refugees were picked up by the U.S. Coast Guard Saturday alone.

That number marked yet again the largest single-day total since 1980, after 375 Cubans were picked up Friday.

The White House has insisted repeatedly that it would not let Mr. Castro dictate U.S. immigration policy but many congressmen said it was doing just that.

"At this point there has not been any pain inflicted on Fidel Castro for having done this," said Senator Bob Graham, a Democrat from Florida where the refugee flood has sparked a state of emergency. "We have been reacting to his actions."

Senate Republican leader Bob Dole contrasted the administration's Cuba policy with its threat to take military

action if necessary to topple the ruling junta in another Caribbean nation, Haiti.

Gen. Dole said Mr. Clinton "should spend as much effort in drawing lines in the sand about democratic change in Cuba as he has spent in threatening Haiti."

The measures announced Saturday also appeared to be an attempt to placate the influential Cuban exile community in the Miami area, which counts some 564,000 people or more than 29 per cent of the population. Many had been outraged by the asylum restrictions.

Under the plan, Cuban Americans will be allowed to send items such as medicine and food to relatives back home, but no cash unless approved by the Treasury Department for humanitarian purposes.

The United States will also increase and amplify Radio Marti broadcasts to Cuba, and allow charter flights between Miami and Havana only if they carry legal immigrants and are consistent with the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act tightening the embargo. The aim, Mr. Clinton said, is "to limit the ability of the Cuban government to accumulate foreign exchange and to enable us to expand the flow of information to the Cuban people."

He said the United States would pursue "with vigour and determination" its campaign

against Cuban abuses of human rights, bringing evidence of any such instances to the United Nations and other international organisations.

Havana Saturday condemned the use of the Guantanamo Bay naval base for housing refugees, saying Washington was trying to turn its base in southeastern Cuba into a "concentration camp of Cuban citizens."

Cuba has long protested the existence of the U.S. base, as well as its use for housing Haitian refugees.

"The government of Cuba declares the firmest rejection by the Cuban people of this new decision of the White House and repeats, one more time, its energetic rejection of the illegal military presence of the United States in its territory," said a Foreign Ministry statement broadcast by the state news agency Prensa Latina.

The mood was calm in the Cuban capital Saturday, with no unusually large military or police presence.

Nearly 15,000 Haitians who fled grinding poverty in their country now are housed in tent camps at the Guantanamo Bay base, something Cuba has strongly protested.

The base has long provoked the ire of Mr. Castro, who says it is illegal because it was established early this century when Cuba was under U.S. occupation.



A mother and her sons have Colmar attempted to get to the United States, Cubans picked up at sea are now to be taken to the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (AFP photo)

More Bangladesh ferry victims found

DHAKA (R) — Rescuers battling strong winds and currents Bangladesh's Meghna River retrieved four more bodies Sunday following a ferry disaster in which more than 300 people were still believed to be missing and presumed drowned.

"The bodies surfaced 24 hours after the ferry MV Dinar went down in the choppy river and more corpses are likely to show up soon," police officer Vani Lal Das told Reuters by telephone from the scene.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia expressed deep shock at the loss of life and ordered a high-level inquiry to determine the cause of the accident, government officials said.

The ferry overturned and sank in the river at Chandpur, about 100 kilometres from Dhaka, Saturday afternoon. It was just 200 metres from shore at the time and only about 60 people are believed to have survived the ordeal.

Police said the four bodies were found about 12 kilometres from where the ferry went down. The rescuers said they did not expect to find any more survivors.

"Hoping for survivors would be too ambitious," speaking officer Aminul Islam, a rescuer as saying.

Officials said a rescue tug was on its way to the site of the accident but it was being delayed by strong currents and high winds and was not expected to arrive until Monday morning.

N. Korea's refusal of inspections threatens Geneva talks, reactor offer

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea's insistence that it will "never" allow inspection of two sites suspected to be at the heart of its nuclear programme threatens to push Washington back into confrontation with Pyongyang, analysts said here Sunday.

The angry refusal, announced by a North Korean Foreign Ministry official Saturday, also appeared to have already frozen South Korea's offer to provide less harmful nuclear reactors to the North.

North Korea, in its statement Saturday, accused South Korea and Japan of raising the issue with "sinister political motives" to scuttle ongoing U.S.-North Korean talks to resolve the nuclear standoff.

The analysts pointed out however that the U.S. side had warned after an Aug. 12 joint statement issued in Geneva that many issues remained unresolved and would be discussed in talks slated for next month.

In the Aug. 12 statement the isolated Communist regime in the North pledged to freeze its nuclear programme and in return the United States said it would arrange to provide safer light-water nuclear reactors.

South Korea immediately offered to supply the reactors and Japan said it would consider helping finance them.

But then both countries began insisting that the two sites be opened before any commitment could be made.

"We will never allow inspection of the military sites at the expense of our sovereignty to receive LWR's (light-water nuclear reactors). This is our unshakable will," the North Korean Foreign Ministry official said.

South Korea has accused Washington of rushing ahead in Geneva to secure a nuclear freeze at the cost of leaving unresolved doubts about past nuclear activities.

Said one analyst: "There is a feeling here, why should they (the North) have it handed to them on a plate, and that the U.S. is going too fast. With times hard in North Korea, there should be a squeeze before more concessions."

In Seoul, the mass circulation Chosun newspaper Sunday quoted an unnamed senior official as saying: "No inspections, no reactors."

"Even if they have one kilogramme of plutonium, we would not supply the reactors," the newspaper quoted the official as saying.

In Geneva, North Korea also pledged to stay within the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, but conspicuous by its absence was any reference to the two sites, which

the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) believes could contain plutonium storage and reprocessing facilities.

It was the IAEA's insistence on inspecting the sites, which the North claims are purely military, and Pyongyang's refusal, that first triggered the nuclear standoff in 1992.

By Sunday there had been no comment from the U.S. side headed by Undersecretary of State Robert Gallucci, who had warned last week that many important issues "remain to be resolved."

His statement was echoed by IAEA spokesman David Kyd who said that "many specific points remain to be settled."

South Korea's presidential spokesman Wednesday quoted U.S. President Bill Clinton as reassuring South Korean President Kim Young-Sam that complete nuclear transparency, including clearing up doubts about the past, would be a condition of the agreed statement being carried through.

"We declare once again that we will never allow a 'special inspection' (of the two sites) though we are willing to involve ourselves in clearing up 'nuclear suspicion' in the future," the North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

De Klerk censors 'embarrassing' history — paper

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South African Deputy President F.W. de Klerk has censored politically embarrassing passages in an official state biography of former President P.W. Botha, a newspaper reported Sunday.

The Johannesburg Sunday Times said tape recordings of cabinet meetings on which the book is partly based had been erased. A spokesman for Mr. De Klerk confirmed Sunday changes had been made to the original manuscript of the biography and said a full statement would be issued later. The newspaper said many conservative statements by Mr. De Klerk and cabinet colleagues during the 1980s were recorded in a draft manuscript of the biography but cut from the final approved version. "A number of potentially embarrassing statements by Mr. De Klerk and other ministers have been rephrased or deleted," it said.

Mr. De Klerk was regarded as highly conservative during his years in Mr. Botha's cabinet. But in 1990, one year after taking over from Mr. Botha as president, Mr. De Klerk began dismantling apartheid and paved the way for last April's all-race elections. Mr. De Klerk's National Party, which said during campaigning that it had put apartheid behind it, came a distant second to President Nelson Mandela's African National Congress in the election.

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Sri Lankan government gets down to work

COLOMBO (R) — Three days after forming a government, Sri Lanka's People's Alliance is getting down to work, proposing changes in the bureaucracy and preparing for this week's parliamentary session, government sources said Sunday.

The pressing tasks ahead of Prime Minister Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga include solving the ethnic conflict, setting up a permanent commission on bribery and corruption and tackling economic issues.

"The euphoria is over. Now it is work," one source said.

New Deputy Defence Minister Amruddha Ratwatte told Reuters that ministers, many of them without cabinet experience, were moving into their offices this week and working out priorities.

He was meeting President Dingiri Banda Wijetunga and service chiefs Monday to discuss work. "We would have to discuss the security situation and ascertain whether the continuation of the curfew is necessary or not."

A 10-hour night curfew in force across the island, will be reduced to seven hours from Monday.

Three people have been killed in political violence at the weekend and 75 incidents of arson, pelting stones and assault has been reported from various parts of the country, police said.

Government sources said the attorney general and the finance secretary were expected to be replaced in a bureaucratic shake-up.

They said that Attorney General Tilak Marapana and Finance and Treasury Secretary R. Paskaralingam were favourites of the United National Party (UNP), defeated after a record 17 years in power.

"They often worked beyond their duties as government officials," the source said. Changes in other posts like the heads of state-run media, national airline Air Lanka and the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation were also anticipated.

The prime minister is likely to meet the business community this week to re-iterate her commitment to free-market policies.

"We are seeking a meeting with her and her officials to discuss the role of the business community," said Mano Selvanathan, deputy chairman of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

He said the island's economy, which has seen a spurt in foreign investment because of the former government's policies, could take off if the new regime attracted foreign cash.

"Long-term investment prospects are good. Both Sri Lanka's main parties advocate open market policies," he told Reuters.

Bishop attacks Indonesia for rejecting Timor offer

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia was being arrogant in rejecting a ceasefire-for-talks offer by guerrillas fighting for independence in East Timor, the former Portuguese colony's Roman Catholic bishop, Carlos Belo, said Sunday.

"There must be talks. But Indonesia is arrogant and I don't think there will be a solution to East Timor's problems in the next 20 years," he told Reuters by telephone from East Timor's capital, Dili.

Bishop Belo said he was willing to mediate talks between the guerrillas and Indonesia's military but the government did not trust him.

"I don't believe they trust me or the church. Their will to control East Timor has made them arrogant," he said.

East Timor military

spokesman Major Simbolon rejected Saturday a ceasefire offer by the guerrillas if Indonesia was prepared to start serious talks over the territory's future.

Jose Ramos Horta, the rebels' Australia-based overseas representative, said last Friday he had been authorised to make the offer by guerrilla leader Konis Santana after encouraging moves by Bishop Belo and the Indonesian Armed Forces suggesting the start of a dialogue.

But Maj. Simbolon scoffed at the offer, saying the guerrilla group was a spent force, ill equipped and abandoned by its foreign backers.

"There will be no compromise... we reject their offer. They are only a few, armed with weapons left behind by the Portuguese nearly two decades ago," he said.

Malaysian party 'offered' posts to Al Arqam leaders

JAKARTA (R) — Leaders of the controversial Al Arqam Islamic sect, banned in Malaysia and in one Indonesian district, were once offered posts in Malaysia's ruling Malay Party, an Indonesian Muslim group said Sunday.

Nahdlatul Ulama Chairman Abdul Rahman Wahid said the offer to join the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) was turned down by the group, outlawed in Malaysia this month, but did not say when it was made.

"Al Arqam leaders were discreetly offered roles in UMNO but they refused," he told Reuters, adding that UMNO was aware of Al Arqam's impact on Muslim voters in a general election.

Malaysia is expected to call for a general election this year or in early 1995 though the government's mandate does not expire until October 1995.

Mr. Wahid, whose organisation claims 40 million members and is influential in Muslim-dominated Indonesia, said Malaysia banned Al Arqam due to its potential threat to UMNO's leadership.

"Al Arqam is considered a political threat to the UMNO leadership because of the impact of their decision to take sides... either UMNO or PAS," he said.

Mr. Wahid was referring to Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS), a party of Muslim fundamentalists that swept to power in Malaysia's north-eastern Kelantan state in the 1990 general election.

Indonesia is considering joining Malaysia in banning Al Arqam because of its controversial religious activities. The group was outlawed in Indonesia's North Sumatra Saturday.

North Sumatra's chief prosecutor, Martin Basiang, said Saturday that the ban on the mystical group, which believes a messiah will appear before a prophesied doomsday, was effective immediately.

Official sources said Al Arqam had several thousand followers in Indonesia but the group was not as influential as in Malaysia where it had made inroads into the civil service and had a vast business network worth \$115 million.

Malaysian police arrested three sect members Saturday as they distributed leaflets after a religious celebration, local press reports said Sunday. Police also seized pamphlets about the movement from the men outside a mosque in the western town of Seremban.

Indonesia is expected to decide this month whether to impose a national ban on the group, whose male members wear turbans and flowing robes and females cover their body except for the eyes.

Mr. Wahid said Indonesia wanted to ban Al Arqam because "puritans and modernist Muslims" did not like the group for what they claimed was its irrational religious practices.

"They actually want to block Al Arqam before it goes further and further and wins more followers," he said.

In Bangkok, the exiled Al Arqam, Abuaya Ashaari Mohammad, accused Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad of violated his human rights and threatened to file a law suit against him.

"I am homesick and because the Malaysian people need me very much, I want to file the lawsuit against Dr. Mahathir," Mr. Ashaari told Reuters in an interview.

"In my preaching, lecturing or my books I never claimed myself to be the prophet or a messiah, so Dr. Mahathir's accusation against me is very disgusting and that's why I have to go back to Malaysia very soon to sue him," Mr. Ashaari said.

"He violated our human rights by banning Al Arqam... He did not act in accordance with Islamic and Malaysian laws," he said.

IRA may announce ceasefire this week

LONDON (Agencies) — The Irish Republican Army (IRA) is preparing to announce an indefinite ceasefire in its battle to oust Britain from Northern Ireland, perhaps as soon as this week, the Observer newspaper reported.

Sunday's edition of the paper said all units of the guerrilla group had been briefed, but told to carry on with regular activities until the ceasefire was announced.

Rumours of a pending IRA ceasefire have been rife for weeks. The British and Irish governments are demanding a permanent ceasefire in return for giving the IRA's political wing Sinn Fein a place at peace talks.

But senior police and security officials have said they would respond to a temporary but long-lasting ceasefire with a corresponding decrease in the number of troops on the ground.

Both the IRA and its Protestant extremist enemies have continued regular attacks and killings despite the rumours. Protestant groups say they will match any IRA ceasefire.

Mexicans to choose new president in key election

MEXICO CITY (R) — Mexicans were set to choose a new president and Congress Sunday in a key national election that could signal the end of the ruling party's 65-year-long absolute grip on power.

Experts were predicting the largest turnout ever for the high-stakes ballot which many fear could erupt into violence if the government does not deliver on promises to hold a clean election.

As many as 70 per cent of the country's 45.7 million registered voters, equipped with supposedly fraud-proof identification cards, were expected to vote at 96,000 polling places around the nation.

By comparison, only 48 per cent of registered voters cast ballots in the last presidential election in 1988.

Most polls indicate that the Institutional Revolutionary Party's (PRI) Ernesto Zedillo will win the battle to succeed President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, whose six-year term ends Dec. 1.

But they also show that for the first time in history a PRI candidate may win with less than 50 per cent of the vote, which could weaken his mandate.

Mr. Zedillo's top rival, Diego Fernandez de Cevallos of the conservative National Action Party, trails in most polls by at least 10 per cent, with Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, centre-left Democratic Revolution Party in third place.

But for the first time since the PRI took control in 1929, having its own man in Los Pinos, the presidential residence, will not give the party unbridled power to run the country.

Electoral reforms assure a



Jose Del Refugio Cano (left) of the telephone workers' union speaks at a press conference in Mexico City, protesting that 55 telephone workers were forced by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) to call voters and urge them to vote for the PRI. Reports of voters who do not exist and vote-buying have thrown into question Mexico's commitment to a clean presidential election (AFP photo)

much stronger opposition in the PRI-dominated National Congress which traditionally has been a rubber stamp for the president.

With all 500 seats in the lower house Chamber of Deputies and 96 places in the newly expanded 128-member Senate up for grabs Sunday, some experts believe the PRI could lose its majority in one or both of the legislative bodies.

"The all-powerful presidency will not be as powerful in the future. If Zedillo wins, he will not have the ability just to push things through Congress," a top Western diplomat said.

Just as important as who wins this election is how they

win. The government has spent \$1 billion to revamp its electoral system in an attempt to remove the possibility of vote-rigging, but Mexicans are still deeply sceptical that they will have a clean election.

Past votes, including the 1988 victory by Salinas, have been tainted by fraud, but after a tumultuous year with a peasant uprising in the state of Chiapas and the March 23 assassination of then-PRI presidential candidate of Luis Donaldo Colosio, even political moderates believe Mexico's political stability is riding on a clean election.

"The country is asking for change. If there is no credi-

bility and clean results, the revolution will come," top Mexican businessman and Salinas ally Juan Sanchez Navarro said in a Mexico City newspaper.

Along with stability is the question of Mexico's economic future, which most believe can be assured only through a fraud-free vote. The financial world, anxious to invest in a stable Mexico, will be watching to see if Mexico can match its sweeping economic reforms with a transition to full democracy.

To lend credibility to the election, Mexico has allowed in foreign observers for the first time ever and has registered 81,000 Mexicans to watch over the polls.

No place like home for lion

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — A neighbour complained about the roaring, but a judge ruled that a three-year-old pet African lion could be kept in a basement outside Buenos Aires. "The lion could not be in a better place than this," said Judge Daniel Llerman after inspecting the cellar of a home in suburban Villa Dominico.

A neighbour of the family that owns Ra the lion complained, about the 150-kilo (330-pound) animal's generous audio capacity and short supply of living space, and suggested the animal be taken to a city zoo. But a crowd of about 100 other lion-loving neighbours crowded outside Ra's owners' home after hearing about reports the judge might order an eviction from his 10-metre high, 15-metre long, seven-metre deep cage.

The judge, accompanied by staff with the Environmental Police and feline experts from a government animal preserve, said Ra was in no danger and was living better than his counterparts behind zoo bars. The lion devours as many as eight kilos of meat daily and his owners bathe him twice a week to keep his coat shiny, they said.

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Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

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Crack in sanctions regime

TURKEY'S decision to reopen the Habur border crossing into northern Iraq in a couple of weeks sounds like the first important crack in the U.N. trade sanctions against Baghdad. Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller announced this "breakthrough" during her latest trip to the southeast of the country where government forces have been waging a war of attrition against separatist Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) for over ten years. Ankara has long maintained that its battered economy has lost at least \$20 billion from U.N. trade sanctions imposed on Iraq in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis in 1990. The closure of the 985-km oil pipeline from Iraq to Turkey's Mediterranean ports has also cost the country \$250 million annually in lost transit fees.

True, the official reopening of the Habur border crossing would not change the situation on the ground very much. Ankara, it may be recalled, had been turning a blind eye to the thriving trade across this frontier point ever since the U.N. Security Council slapped the embargo against Iraq, as Turkish lorries carried fruit and vegetables and brought back cheap oil. In point of fact, the whole Western world turned a blind eye to this unofficial trade.

The official announcement that the hitherto unofficial trade will become official in the near future could thus be a harbinger of more relaxation of trade against Baghdad. It is doubtful though that Ankara would boldly declare the resumption of trade with Iraq without an anticipation of a wider Western relaxation of trade sanctions with the Baghdad government. This is not to mention that Turkish-Iraqi talks on the reopening of the oil pipeline are also gaining momentum. There is no doubt that these new openings could not have been contemplated without prior consultations with Washington and its principal allies. On the strength of these developments, therefore, 1995 could set the stage for the lifting of sanctions against Iraq.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i Arabic daily said Sunday that there are genuine apprehensions on the part of Arab masses about Israel's intentions and there is real fear that the peace process would collapse due to Israel's intransigent attitudes in its dealings with the Arab parties. Indeed, said Mahmoud Rimawi, one has to take stock of the negotiations at least on the Israeli-Palestinian track one year after the signing of the Oslo agreement. Accusing Israel of trying to avoid the implementation of the deal with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) the writer said that the Israelis are exploiting the Palestinian weak economy and using the Arab workers in Israel as a lever to exercise pressure on the PLO leadership to succumb to Zionist desires. The Israeli attitude, said the writer, has rendered the Palestine National Authority in a rather difficult position but, he said, the PLO leadership is trying hard to succeed and is hoping to expand the national authority to the other parts of the occupied Palestinian lands despite the Israeli pressures. He said the Oslo deal, despite the numerous loopholes, has paved the ground for the Palestinians to assume responsibility for their own affairs and responsibilities on the internal front, a step that precedes the full independence and statehood. The writer said that the opponents of the deal should allow the PLO authority further time to put matters right and eventually end Israel's occupation of the Arab land.

A COLUMNIST in Sawt Al Shaab daily Sunday criticised Nabil Shaath, head of the Palestinian negotiating team for agreeing to Israel's wishes and responding to Zionist extremists groups desires to open the Ibrahim Mosque for Jewish worshippers alone. The Israeli government has not yet responded to the United Nations Security Council's resolution and the world community which demanded that the mosque be opened for the Muslim worshippers following the massacre of Muslims inside the mosque earlier this year, said the writer, Arafat Hijazi. He said that the Palestine Liberation Organisation should object to this move on the part of the Israeli government, and should seek to stop the Jews from transforming the shrine into a synagogue by preventing Muslims from praying in the mosque and allowing the Jews to practice their worshipping there, said the writer.

Helping to etch a new landscape in the Middle East

By Anthony Lewis

WASHINGTON — By the end of 1996, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said, it is "entirely possible" that Israel will be at peace with all its neighbours. "It would have seemed visionary," he said, "but not at the pace at which things are going."

In a conversation in his office, the secretary was strikingly upbeat on the possibility of peace between Israel and Syria, for a generation the bitterest of enemies. On a Middle East tour from which he had just returned, he again shuttled between Jerusalem and Damascus, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Syrian President Hafez Assad.

"I think they both want peace," Mr. Christopher said. "And a warm peace: trade, tourism."

"In Assad and Rabin you have the two toughest and most experienced negotiators in the Middle East. It's an existential thing for both, so they are very careful in examining things."

"Assad does that out loud: for five hours in my last visit with him. 'What does Rabin mean by this?' Sometimes I don't know, and I say I'll have to ask."

Rabin internalises.

"Up to this last trip there was a psychological barrier. I believe they've broken through, discussing the concrete elements — the nature of peace, withdrawal, security. They're all intertwined, and the parties have different views on how they should fit together. There are still big gaps."

That description of what is happening, especially the scene with Mr. Assad, makes one thing clear about the onrushing peace process. The American role is essential, and Mr. Christopher has taken on that responsibility himself.

Critics of President Bill Clinton's foreign policy have made Mr. Christopher a target. I have been critical of such things as the policy on Bosnia. But Mr. Christopher brings to the Middle East the qualities that made him such a superb negotiator in the Iran hostage crisis: first-rate legal skills, patience, commitment.

As an example of the crucial American role in the region, the secretary mentioned an arrangement that he brokered last year to stop rocket attacks on northern Israel from Hizbollah forces in Lebanon. In return for a halt, Israel agreed not to attack beyond

its security zone in southern Lebanon.

As Mr. Christopher was on his way to the Middle East just now, an Israeli pilot in error hit a civilian target and killed 10 people. Israel apologised, but Hizbollah launched three waves of rockets. Mr. Christopher appealed to the Syrians to help stop what threatened to derail the negotiations.

The Syrians "said they would make a maximum effort," Mr. Christopher said. "They obviously have some capacity to influence Hizbollah — how great I'm not sure." The rocket attacks stopped.

A Syrian-Israeli deal, if it comes, would have to overcome much internal resistance: Syrians reluctant to accept Israel, Israelis reluctant to give up the Golan Heights. "Assad thinks it will take a lot of preparation," Mr. Christopher said. "They've been through so much conditioning the other way. But in time..."

Mr. Assad has evidently started that preparation. Syrian television and newspapers played up the peace ceremony between Prime Minister Rabin and His Majesty King Hussein — a remarkable shift in Syrian

practice.

On the Palestinians, Mr. Christopher said he was urging countries that had pledged aid to start projects in Gaza immediately, and at the same time urging on PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat the financial "accountability and transparency" that donors expect.

Democracy and human rights are growing concerns among Palestinians. Mr. Arafat troubled many by closing the newspaper An Nahar for being "pro-Jordanian" — and then by banning a widely respected columnist, Daoud Kattab, for signing a petition against the closing. Mr. Christopher said he raised the question of press freedom with Mr. Arafat.

Then there is the question of elections in the West Bank and Gaza. Mr. Christopher said: "That will be an area where Mr. Arafat will require constant urging, to respond to the thirst for representation among the Palestinians."

Over all, Mr. Christopher said, "The Middle East landscape is being transformed. Israelis are now accepted. The isolation is vanishing."

The New York Times.

Arafat's illogical act

By Ghassan Bishara

SUPPORTERS OF democracy everywhere should stand up now and oppose Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's move against An Nahar. The hard-and-long-struggling Palestinian people deserve to reap the fruit of their struggle and to begin to enjoy a democratic rule.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with the Sept. 13 arrangement between Israel and the PLO, and whether events since then do or do not serve the best interests of the Palestinian people, the crackdown on the press by Mr. Arafat this early in the process of self-government is not a good beginning at all.

Worse than the silencing of An Nahar is the lack of regard the act itself shows towards the Palestinian people and towards those who have supported them. Mr. Arafat's move against the freedom of expression, one of the most elemental pillars of democracy, is a telling story. It is astounding to try to fathom the logic behind such an undertaking, particularly in light of the conclusive defeat of the Arab authoritarian order at the hands of tiny, but democratic, Israel.

Mr. Arafat must realise this, and he must seek to change the style of governing in the Palestinian arena. The best place to start is to encourage, not hinder, free expression. It is also astonishing to discern how little PLO leaders understand about their people in the territories. For years, these people protested loudly against the occupation authorities' censorship of their press.

The Palestinian people — beneficiaries of a free and unbridled press — shall not acquiesce to the PLO leaders' attempts to force them what they have rejected from their occupiers. The closure of An Nahar will needlessly cancel criticism of Israel's role as a censor of the Palestinian press and exonerate it historically. Censorship of the press is wrong, whether decreed by Israel or the PLO.

The message from the Arab-Palestinian people is clear: Democratisation is the only condition for progress. This means allowing for a free press. Without it, conditions will remain unchanged. Even if An Nahar has

been financed by Jordan, and is sympathetic to Jordan's point of view, Mr. Arafat, by banning it in the autonomous areas, is at best sending a message of intolerance. At worst, he is signaling his intent to govern just like many others in the region.

The PLO's financing of many publications in the Middle East in exchange for expression of support for PLO objectives was precisely the rationale behind Israel's on-and-off censorship of the Palestinian press. The present irony will not escape anyone. One would hope that the Arab-Palestinian press could soon achieve full financial and editorial independence. Until then, however, Mr. Arafat would do his best to stay clear of the press.

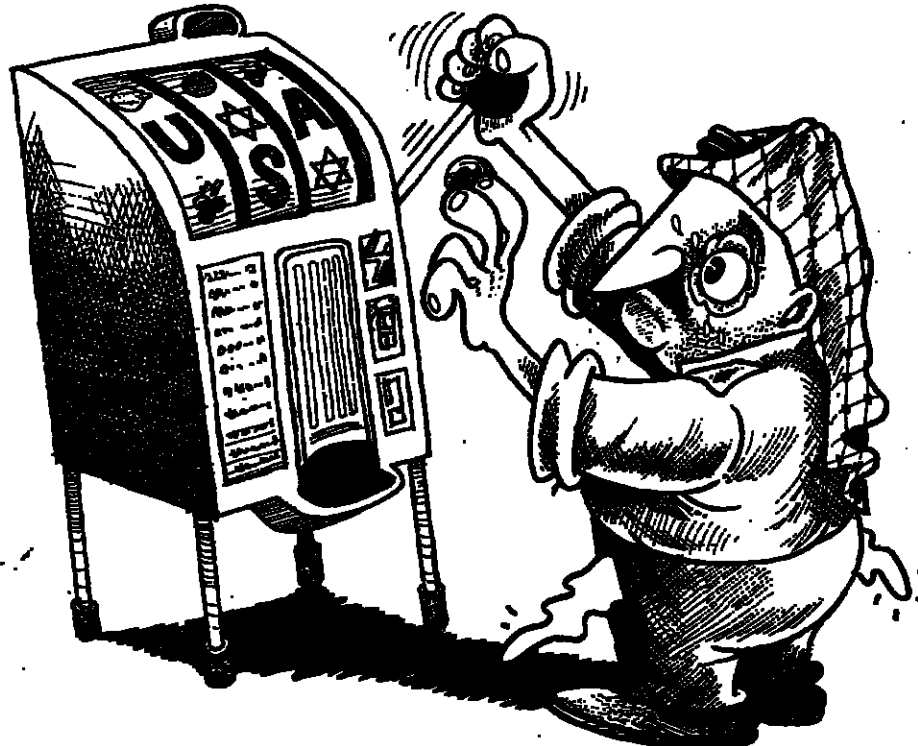
To facilitate democracy in the Palestinian areas, various important elements should be present: First is an unequivocal Palestinian belief in the value of democracy, including that of freedom of the press. Also critical is the Palestinians' willingness to fight for it and to continue to protect it with all their might. Because the transformation to a democratic rule occurs at a cost to the order already in place, it is expected of leaders to try to slow down, or even scuttle, the Palestinians' march toward democracy.

The U.S. could extend a hand to assist democracy in the territories. A gripe of most Arab-Palestinian activists and intellectuals has been that unlike the efforts the U.S. has made to promote democracy in all corners of the world, it has shown no real inclination to do so in the Arab World. The greatest service the U.S. and others can offer the Palestinians would be to persuade the leaders of the necessity to democratisate and to help create an environment in which the people, with a certain measure of confidence and security, can navigate their way towards the realisation of their dreams.

Now is the best time to do so, and the opportunity should not be allowed to slip away.

The writer, an American of Palestinian descent, is a freelance journalist based in Washington. The article is reprinted from the Washington Post.

M. KAHIL



NATO suffers major blow with Woerner's death

By Nicholas Doughty
Reuter

BRUSSELS — NATO, already struggling with problems in Bosnia and other vital questions of European security, has suffered a major blow with the death of secretary-general Manfred Woerner.

Diplomats and officials say that whoever replaces Woerner will face a tough task in guiding the 16-nation alliance.

Mr. Woerner, 59, died on Saturday after a long struggle against cancer but he had been absent from NATO headquarters since May, trying to recover from the effects of three operations.

"It has been noticeable since then that things have drifted a bit without a firm hand," said one alliance diplomat, who asked not to be identified. "Now, it's a big loss."

Mr. Woerner's strength, diplomats say, was that he had a vision of what NATO's role should be in post-cold war Europe, as well as the political experience and force of will to unite the sometimes fractious allies.

The tasks now facing the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation are formidable. The alliance is already working with the United Nations in Bosnia, a relationship that has been frayed on occasions because of disagreements on when and how to use air strikes.

Within the next few months, NATO may need

to either deliver on its promise to send in a peacekeeping force of up to 50,000 troops or it may be involved in helping extract thousands of U.N. troops if last-ditch peace efforts fail.

Mr. Woerner worked hard to build a new relationship of cooperation with the Soviet Union and then Russia but Moscow has proved a difficult partner for the West in recent months.

Russia has opposed NATO action in Bosnia and raised strong objections to any possible expansion of the alliance to take in Moscow's former satellites in Eastern Europe as members.

The alliance has offered all of its former foes closer military ties through the Partnership for Peace scheme but has also promised that it will take on new members at some point.

Under pressure from Eastern European states worried about their security, NATO seems unlikely to delay that debate much longer. The question of who to admit and who to leave out will be difficult and possibly divisive.

In the meantime, NATO has to make the Partnership for Peace work through plans for joint military exercises with its new partners and very little spare cash.

In an age of rapidly-shrinking defence budgets, the alliance also has trouble in making sure that its integrated military structure — one of the cornerstones of NATO — continues to bind the member nations

together.

So who could be best suited to the challenges ahead?

The alliance's headquarters in Brussels has been buzzing with speculation for months about who might replace him and member nations now have to agree on a candidate.

Two names have emerged in the corridor talk as front-runners — Norway's Thorvald Stoltenberg, a former foreign minister and currently U.N. peace mediator, and former Italian Prime Minister Giuliano Amato.

Apart from Mr. Stoltenberg and Mr. Amato, other names mentioned include former Dutch Premier Ruud Lubbers, who recently lost out in the battle to succeed Jacques Delors as president of the European Commission in Brussels.

Mr. Lubbers' former foreign minister, Hans Van Den Broek, is currently in charge of foreign policy at the European Commission but is widely believed to be interested in the NATO post.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd and Defence Secretary Malcolm Rifkind, Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes and his predecessor, Mark Eyskens, have also been mentioned.

The United States, NATO's senior member, has the command of alliance forces in Europe and, for that reason, is effectively ruled out of the race for the top political post.

By Susumo Sono
Agence France Presse

TOKYO — Shin Sakurai is one of a long line of cabinet members to let sentiments about Japan's wartime past cause his political downfall and indignation among his country's neighbours.

But even with the long list of known casualties, there is plenty of evidence that Mr. Sakurai is not alone in feeling Japan has been unfairly treated by historians over the period up to 1945.

The state minister resigned on Sunday after creating an international storm by saying "I don't think Japan fought with the aim of waging a war of aggression."

"I don't think we should take the position that Japan was the only one that was wrong," It was thanks to Japan that Asian neighbours had become independent and education had advanced faster, he added.

It was thanks to Mr. Sakurai that Japan faced a new official protest from South Korean and Yomichi Murayama became the latest prime minister to have to apologise over a cabinet minister's remarks.

Many of those who have previously got into trouble were also from the Liberal Democratic Party, now in an unlikely alliance with Mr. Murayama's socialists.

But the Asahi Shimbun daily highlighted how "not an inconsiderable number of Liberal Democratic Party legislators support the position shown by Sakurai."

They are a minority in number. But the defenders of Japan's past show themselves regularly. Only three months ago, Shigetomo Nagano resigned as justice minister for claiming the

Defending Japan's dark past

1937 Nanjing massacre was a "fabrication."

Mr. Nagano, a member of the Renewal Party formed last year by LDP defectors, also sparked strong protests from Asian countries invaded by Japan before and during World War II.

According to Chinese figures, more than 300,000 people were killed by Japanese soldiers in Nanjing.

LDP legislator and former Transport Minister Shintaro Ishihara made remarks similar to Nagano. In 1990, he was quoted by a U.S. magazine as saying the Nanjing massacre was fabricated by China.

Diplomatic relations between Japan and South Korea were hit in May 1990 when then LDP Secretary General Ichiro Ozawa said Japan had no need to apologise for its colonial rule of the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945.

Two years earlier, senior LDP member and then National Land Agency director General Seisuke Okano said it was unfair to blame Japan for the war because European countries had also colonised Asia.

In 1986, Education Minister Masayuki Fujio, another LDP member said in a magazine interview that Korea was also responsible for Japan's annexation of the Korean peninsula in 1910.

Mr. Fujio defended the role of Japan's Imperial Army, saying that Japan was not the only country which waged a war of aggression.

Confronted with protests from China, South Korea and other Asian countries, the prime minister of the time Yasuhiro Nakasone cancelled a plan to visit Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine, dedicated to the war dead, on Aug. 15, the anniversary of Japan's defeat in World War II.

Since then no Japanese prime minister has visited Yasukuni, where Hideki Tojo, prime minister during the Pacific war, is also buried.

The Sakurai controversy came on the eve of the 49th anniversary of Japanese commemorations for its war dead.

Episodes such as that over Mr. Sakurai strengthen the belief of many of its Pacific neighbours that Japan is refusing to come to terms with its past.

Australia's war-veterans chief Major General William James was the latest to accuse the Japanese on Sunday.

Opening a year of special commemoration for Australian dead, Mr. James, president of the Returned Services League, said: "Germany has sought to come to terms with her past and some of the Japanese people have too."

"As a nation Japan has yet to come to terms with her past. What a significant achievement it would be if that happened this year," he said.

Features

'Links predate Jordan, Israel'

(Continued from page 1)

translation of the interview:

Question: Your Majesty, over the 42 years of your reign you have witnessed grave incidents. Do you consider the signing of the Washington Declaration with Israel ending a 46-year state of war a crowning of your life achievements?

Answer: No, since this agreement does not mean in itself an end to the pains suffered by people in the region. And still one can say that the declaration is a climax of developments that culminated in Israel and Jordan deciding to make peace between them.

Q: Was it a decision taken by the King alone?

A: I have dreamed all my life to have the chance (to give) a better guarantee to the life of my people. Therefore, the overwhelming majority of Jordanians have supported that change we reached in Washington. I pray that fate would enable me to join the list of pioneers of peace in this region. Jordan should be a model for all to see how talents unexplored over decades can be used to serve peace.

Q: Not all are convinced of these principles. Syria, and consequently Lebanon, did not yet define their tracks as Your Majesty did.

A: All the officials in the Middle East are seriously looking for real peace, and I reaffirm, all, in fact, there is no substitute to seeking a comprehensive peace which includes Israel and all its Arab neighbours. Every Arab-Israeli peace initiative, such as the Jordanian-Israeli agreements, are but blocks in the structure of a comprehensive peace that would be reached later.

Q: It seems that not all the leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) share with you this view. (Yasser) Arafat's Foreign Minister Farouk Kaddoumi reiterated that the destruction of Israel is inevitable.

A: Arafat and Kaddoumi are free to say whatever they like. But this does not change anything in the inevitability of the peace process.

Q: We do not like to imagine what can take place in case one of the main active personalities in the peace process might fall victim to an assassination (attempt) concocted by the enemies of the idea of a just peace between the Arabs and Israel... Do you remember the fate of (late Egyptian President Anwar) Sadat?

A: Anyone supporting such decisions is threatened... But responsible politicians should work in accordance to what their consciences dictate and what serves their peoples. But with regards to us, we are determined to have peace and nothing will dissuade us from that direction.

Q: Why do you focus on the peace negotiations with the Israelis at this specific time?

A: No other Arab country has offered to the Palestinians what Jordan offered, and no one else has suffered as we did for them. Now that the general atmosphere surrounding the negotiations is okay, but still the negotiations might take some time. There are reasons for that. We are not willing only to agree on the specific places to delineate the border in the Jordan Valley, we want to convert the valley into a valley of peace and to carry out joint projects with a futuristic dimension. In addition, we want to know our shares of water and the existing possibilities for the optimal use of available water sources and finding new ones provided that that takes place within a regional framework. This takes time and we will continue to negotiate until we achieve tangible success and then the Jordanian people will have to give their view and say if they are satisfied with the outcome, and those with opposing views have to express their views too. A dictated peace will not be a real peace.

Q: Will you sign a peace agreement with Israel this year?

A: I do not want to rule out that possibility. But negotiations have started only a short while ago. I do not know how long they will take.

Q: Your agreement with Israel in Washington has irritated the PLO leadership.

Arafat was angered by that paragraph on Jordan's priority to the holy places in Jerusalem in the negotiations over the final status of the city. Is not there anything to justify this anger?

A: Never. The special relations between the Hashemite family and Jerusalem and its holy places date back to the era before the declaration of the state of Israel and the establishment of the Kingdom of Jordan. What happened in Washington is nothing more than an affirmation of this fact, knowing that Jordan fought for Jerusalem in 1948 and had saved it.

Q: ... from the first of the young state of Israel?

A: The disaster came with the 1967 war when Israel took over the city of Jerusalem. And, despite that, we continued to honour our duties towards the holy places, something endorsed by the Arab summit convened in Rabat in 1974.

Q: Still, Israel gave the PLO an affirmation included in the joint declaration of principles that Israel will negotiate only with the organisation on the final status of the city of Jerusalem, which caused Arafat a feeling of humiliation.

A: There is a new element, and that is the quest to separate between the protection of the holy Islamic, Christian and Jewish sites and between the political differences. If this quest succeeds, Jerusalem will indeed become the city of peace for all. But this does not at all affect the negotiations over the future of the city as agreed between the Palestinian leadership and Israel.

Q: Maybe Israel believes it has an interest to give preferential treatment for one party over another or vice-versa?

A: Out of integrity I say that Jordan took the initiative in this regard to guarantee that things would not go out of hand and get confused before a satisfactory solution to all parties is reached. Thus we have to differentiate between two things: The religious matters on the one hand, and the rights of the Palestinians to regain these rights.

Q: Arafat's expert on Jerusalem affairs Faisal Al Hussein believes that raising the question of Jerusalem is the best means to destroy the peace process.

A: There is nothing justifying any stirring of emotions. I hope that no one will try to hide his failure by raising the question of Jerusalem. Believe me, we do not want to compete with the Palestinians.

Q: Did you decide to push the peace process forward by a Jordanian initiative because of your doubts that Israel and the PLO will hold new agreements behind your back and at Jordan's expense?

A: The Palestinians have really surprised us, although we have coordinated our policies at the 1991 Madrid peace conference. Still we continued to support them. Now, we have the right to take care of our interests. We also were continuously caring for coordination and joint action. But this will have always stumbled and was not up to our expectations. Thus we were prompted to take the initiative.

Q: Do you expect the emergence of an independent Palestinian state or do you prefer to see a Jordanian-Palestinian federation?

A: It is premature to say anything certain about the future relations between Jordan and the Palestinian territories. The most important thing is for the Palestinians to regain their democratic rights and after that we can see what we can do. Let us leave matters to time to handle this question, but we do respect the Palestinian people's independent decision regardless of its nature.

Q: Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians emigrated to Jordan following the war of 1967. Will they remain in Jordan or would they be able to return to Palestine?

A: This will be determined by a four-member committee from Jordan, Egypt, Israel and the Palestinians. It is the displaced people's right to be repatriated. Q: All the politicians involved in the peace process have been meeting and discussing peace; why has not Yasser Arafat come to Amman?

A: I am not aware of the reason. But we welcome him any time here.

Q: The Middle East would not enjoy peace without Syria. Will Hafez Al Assad move in the required direction or will he remain isolated as he is reflecting pan-Arabism?

A: I believe that President Assad seeks peace and that things would be moving because Syria and Lebanon constitute true elements in the comprehensive peace that should prevail in the region.

Q: Is there any coordination between yourself and Hafez Al Assad?

A: Not at the moment. But I believe that the Jordanian initiative did not surprise President Assad a great deal as we have been on constant contact. When I last met him I explained that we were doing our best to maximise our potential to the best of our ability.

Q: Does this mean that Assad supports your policies towards Israel?

A: Anyway, he has not shown any opposition thus far.

Q: Do you visualise the emergence of a common market between Israel and its Arab neighbours?

A: There are unlimited possibilities for improving the living conditions of people. Such a market would offer us all better stability, security and prosperity which would augur well for the rest of the world.

Q: But in this case the Arabs might face an Israeli economic hegemony?

A: I do not believe that Jordan has anything to fear from the common market idea. Ours is a developed country and our people enjoy a high degree of culture. We can face any challenge with reassured mind and self-confidence and there is no reason for us to fear the future of Israel's hegemony.

Q: For four years your country has been in isolation from the Arab countries for your support of Saddam Hussein in the Gulf Crisis. Has the time come for returning Iraq to the Arab fold or even to involve Iraq in the peace process with Israel?

A: I cannot speak for others. But I hope that Iraq, which is a vital element in this region, would return to life again and I hope that the Iraqi people's sufferings will end. As to peace in the region, Iraq would have its important role to play.

Q: Are you ready to mediate so as to return Iraq to the world community's fold?

A: I have not been approached for such a role, and therefore I have not made any contacts in this matter.

Q: You are the oldest ruling head of state in the Middle East, can you predict when peace would prevail?

A: Both sides in the conflict have realised that there is no alternative to a peaceful settlement. But it is difficult to predict when this can be translated into fact.

Q: U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher believes that he can attain peace before the end of 1996 — is he overoptimistic?

A: Not at all. But this depends on the speed in which the two sides can make their hopes and good intentions turn into realities.

Q: After 17 years the late Egyptian president, Anwar Sadat, entered the "hell side" of the Arab-Israeli conflict with a risk to his life, but it did not bring better for the Arabs than to join Sadat's peaceful bid instead of warring all these years?

A: Many opportunities were missed in the past, before and after Sadat, and this resulted in our region facing a tragedy. The leaders had cared only for their "narrow" interests, overlooked Pan-Arab interests. On the Arab and Israeli sides many of them had run after illusions, something which has now come to an end.

Q: You will shortly visit Germany. How do you think European contribute to the peace process?

A: It is my hope that our friendship with Europe would help us achieve our vision of a peaceful Middle East.

Q: Your Majesty, you have encountered an acute health crisis. What objectives did you define for yourself?

A: Supporting the principles of democracy, pluralism and human rights. We hope to set a good example to others in utilising the fruits of peace for the benefit of all. I hope of the breaking for a new dawn.

'Jordan seeks just peace'

(Continued from page 1)

"We are entering a new battle which we feel eligible and qualified to win with our awareness, scientific knowledge, strong will, resolve and determination because we believe that this country possesses a great potential, and we believe that this united Jordanian family is entrusted with the principles and objectives of the Arab Nation," King Hussein said.

"We hope that the Kingdom, with its united family, will set a good example to others through their dedicated efforts conducted in an

atmosphere of democracy and respect of human rights," the King said.

The Armed Forces, he said, will be always ready and able to carry out its duty.

"We have lived hard years but, with God's will, we will pursue the path that would lead to our aspired goals," he said.

Jordan continues to support the Palestinians' rights in their own homeland. In Jordan, he added, "we live as one family pursuing the same march until the day comes when circumstances will allow people to choose their way."



Two South Korean children join an anti-war march in downtown Seoul urging the government to resort to dialogue rather than sanctions in the nuclear standoff with North Korea (AFP photo)

North Korea played nuclear card to meet U.S. on equal footing

By Peter James Spielmann
The Associated Press

SEOUL — Isolated and with its economy faltering, North Korea had only one card to play to pry Western aid and diplomatic recognition out of Washington — the threat to go nuclear.

With the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty up for renewal in 1995, the United States felt the stakes were too high to let North Korea become a high-profile rogue nuclear state.

That could inspire countries like Libya, Iran and Pakistan to try and openly join the nuclear club. And the pressure for South Korea and Japan to face North Korea's challenge would be irresistible, opening a nuclear arms race in Asia.

So the deal struck in

Geneva last weekend was practically inevitable. It showed that however badly off the Communist North may be, its diplomatic game with the West has been remarkably sophisticated, especially considering the slim hand. Pyongyang had to play.

The United States provided assurances that North Korea would get new 2,000-megawatt light-water nuclear reactors, aid in the form of energy alternatives until the new reactors are on line, and diplomatic recognition.

The North agreed to forego a suspected nuclear weapons programme that was of dubious intrinsic value. It promised to shut down its old 5-megawatt reactor, not reproduce some 8,000 spent fuel rods now in storage, and halt construction of two new graphite reactors, which produce plutonium as a byproduct.

Reprocessing the 8,000 spent fuel rods would have yielded enough plutonium to make five or six nuclear weapons. Heading off that possibility was the chief U.S. goal in these talks.

North Korea would also shut down its fuel reprocessing centre and put it under supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It would allow the U.N. agency's inspectors into its declared nuclear facilities under a safeguards agreement.

Pyongyang signed in 1992. It's not clear if the North will let the IAEA check two other suspected nuclear sites it has designated as off-limits "military bases," that is a point the

United States is sure to insist on in future talks.

Further negotiations are scheduled in Geneva on Sept. 23 on the interim energy alternatives North Korea has been promised, establishing liaison offices in Washington and Pyongyang as a first step to full mutual recognition, final disposal of the 8,000 spent fuel rods and providing the new reactors.

To avoid hefty costs to the American taxpayer, chief U.S. negotiator Robert Galucci is trying to arrange for Germany and Japan, and perhaps South Korea, to pay most of the cost of the new reactors, which would be provided by South Korea or Russia. The deal is impressive for a reclusive state that lost its

long-time ruler in the midst of the crisis and remains as hard-line as ever. In essence, all North Korea has pledged to do is live up to the agreement it signed in 1992.

Since then, the North adroitly retained its ability to go nuclear while adding new demands as the price of its cooperation with U.N. inspectors.

Coming out of this round of talks, it still holds 8,000 plutonium-bearing fuel rods, not to mention the plutonium it extracted from reprocessing in the past. The CIA figures it has enough to make one or two bombs.

And it doesn't have to cooperate beyond putting its nuclear programme temporarily on hold until Washington coughs up the aid package.

Jordan, PLO open discussion on relations

(Continued from page 1)

attempts at independence by interfering in the running of their affairs.

On the economic level, for example, the Palestinian leadership has repeatedly stalled over the signing of the economic pact because of its allowances for a role for the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) in licensing banking operations and its recognition of the Jordanian dinar as the main currency in the occupied territories.

"Politically, the Palestinians saw a Palestinian currency as a symbol of their sovereignty, but economically it would be disastrous for them and us," another senior official said.

For one, a third of the Kingdom's money supply is being circulated in the occupied territories and the Kingdom wanted to place guards against being faced with a situation where it would have to buy back all the Jordanian dinars being dumped without prior notice. "This is why Jordan was asking for a grace period if the Palestinians were seriously intent on creating a Palestinian currency," one official explained.

If a Palestinian currency is issued, "the natural thing for the residents in the West Bank to do is to dump the Jordanian dinar and buy the new Palestinian currency," the official added.

"Naturally, because the Jordanian dinar is not an international currency, we would have to buy it all back immediately," he said.

"If you do not honour your own currency, you would not only empty the Central Bank of its reserves, but also place a strain on the Jordanian dinar which would mean devaluing it immediately," he added.

"What we are telling the Palestinians is: If you want to have your own currency we have a right, as Jordan, to be told ahead of time so that we could take protective measures," the official said.

Jordan, as part of its assigned economic pact with the Palestinians, has asked that banks operating in the Palestinian self-rule

areas also abide by the regulations of the CBJ in what Jordanian officials say is also a protective measure against facility of bank loans.

Before the self-rule arrangements, banks in the occupied territories, used to operate almost as moneychangers with no provisions for bank loans and other banking activities.

"Now that the banks are going to give loans they would be giving Jordanian dinars against a piece of land," one official explained. "This would naturally mean that the country's treasury has new commitments."

"With banks operating in Jordan, there is no problem because they are operating under CBJ regulations. But these new banks would be using the Jordanian currency as the main currency and not following the regulations governing the use of this currency," the official added.

Other than the details of the pending economic pact, Jordanian officials hope to tackle the new developments on this arrangement with agreements incorporating new agreements forged between the Palestinians and Israel and the Palestinians and Egypt on the one hand and Jordan and Israel on the other, including a \$30 million trade agreement for Jordanian exports into the West Bank areas outside those which fall under the self-rule authority.

Jordan and Israel, at the end of a two-week bilateral round which ended last week, agreed to a trade pact that authorised Amman to export \$30 million in consumer goods to the still-occupied areas of the West Bank before the end of 1994.

The PLO immediately criticised the pact, saying that it bypassed the Palestinian self-rule authority and ignored the fact that these areas are to fall under the rule of this authority.

The export agreement, Jordanian officials have said, does not contradict an earlier agreement with the Palestinians that allowed Jordan to export \$300 million to the West Bank and that the Jordan-Israel agreement was only the necessary step before the kingdom can actually execute its agreement with the Palestinians.

"After having gained Palestinian approval for a ceiling of

\$300 million, we had to get Israeli approval for these exports because Israel still controls the entry points into these areas," one Jordanian negotiator recently told the Jordan Times.

"This was only the second step in our agreement with the Palestinians so that it can become possible for us to export anything into the occupied territories," the negotiator added.

A senior Jordanian official said Sunday that Jordan will discuss this export agreement with the Palestinian side and is "optimistic" the Palestinian side will understand.

"I hope that they came up with a statement saying we should have an agreement for \$70 million instead of \$30 million," the official said.

Jordanian officials were on Sunday confident that they would be able to work out these and other issues with their Palestinian counterparts. "We will tell them that while we understand their political considerations we have to overcome these considerations and get down to the things that must be done," a senior official said.

"I am confident that the two days of meeting will bring results on the economic front," another official also concurred.

On the political front, the Jordanian officials said that they hoped the political committee meetings in Amman would "lay the foundation" for a new chapter in the political relations between the two leaderships.

However, they did not think that the meeting here would resolve all the outstanding political differences and expect that a planned meeting between His Majesty King Hussein and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat would be the "appropriate forum" for resolving these problems.

Row over arms

(Continued from page 1)

Israel and the PLO are due to resume talks in Cairo on Monday on transferring civilian powers in the areas of education, health care, tourism, social affairs, the budget and taxation.

Both sides have said the early transfer of powers should be agreed by Wednesday.

Endangered gorillas caught up in conflict

By Susan Njanji
Agence France Presse

RUHengeri, Rwanda — Rwanda's rare mountain gorillas, stars of the box-office smash "Gorillas in the Mist," appear to have emerged unscathed from the Rwandan civil war, the authorities here believe.

Now the new Rwandan government is keen to re-open the Kingi national park where they live, some 120 kilometres from Kigali.

Conservationists reckon that Kingi, in the northeast Virunga mountains, is home to more than half of the world's estimated total mountain gorilla population of 400.

The authorities here and park workers are hopeful that the gorillas, feared to have been caught up in crossfire or displaced by the fleeing refugees, are still alive in or somewhere near the game park.

"I understand the gorillas are still there, and we hope to re-open the park shortly," said Eugene Twizere, the deputy prefect for the Ruhengeri prefecture, in the northeast of the country, in an interview with AFP.

A driver and tourist guide for the park, Muhammad Juma, said: "It appears no gorillas were killed during the fighting. I think many of them fled to Kisoro forest in Uganda or Virunga in Zaire."

Hundreds of the park employees and their families from within the area, fled the war to Zaire through the mountainous forests inhabited by the gorillas.

A stretch of mountains lie along the northern border of Rwanda with neighbouring

Zaire and Uganda.

A Scottish veterinary researcher, Alan Goshall, who visited the park late last month to assess damage and re-build tourism and environmental aid, said from the fresh trails of the gorillas he saw, "they appear to be fine."

"Anyway, even if the gorillas fled to Zaire or Uganda, I am sure the wardens will be able to lure them back to our park," said Ahmad Bizimanga, an animal science student who was attached to Kingi park.

The workers said the park contained "many" gorillas and attracted dozens of tourists every day before the April 4 death of former President Juvenal Habyarimana, killed in a suspected rocket attack on his plane, triggered the massacre of up to one million people in a merciless civil war.

The park's guest rooms and lodges were destroyed and looted during the 14 weeks of warfare that unleashed Habyarimana's Hutu militia against both Hutu opponents and the minority Tutsi tribe.

Tourist interest was fuelled by the film "Gorillas in the Mist," featuring Sigourney Weaver as the American conservationist Dian Fossey, who through close contact with the animals became an expert on the species.

Professor Goshall said there was minimal poaching during the war and thus the "rare animals" are probably better off now regarding disturbances and poaching than they have ever been.

Twizere said the government expected to reopen the park soon.

Nothstein, Podlesch, Risi win last world titles

PALERMO, Sicily (AP) — Martin Nothstein won the world keirin title Saturday night to become the first American man to win two gold medals in the same year at the World Track Cycling Championships in Sicily.

The 23-year-old sprinter proclaimed "I'm the fastest man in the world on two wheels" following his second triumph in the closing day of the World Track Cycling Championships in Sicily.

The young American, who travelled to Palermo with little hopes of victory following a serious heel injury three months ago, beat three-time world champion Michael Hubner of Germany and Italy's Federico Paris in an eight-man final at the Palermo velodrome.

Nothstein first caused a sensation Wednesday when he won the world sprint title, 82 years after the last U.S. victory in the event by Frank Kramer.

"My win in sprint was somewhat unexpected. I can't say the same for tonight. I won silver in Keirin last year and I had high hopes for this race," Nothstein said after sitting through two appeals of his victory.

The jury rejected protests by both the Italian and Belgian teams who had accused the American of illegal behaviour on the track.

Nothstein, showing an impressive power, led throughout the final lap and withstood the strong challenge of Hubner, who settled for silver after having won the event three straight years from 1990-1992.



American Marty Nothstein (left) races to win the gold medal of the Keirin race at the World Track Cycling Championships (AFP photo)

Keirin is a motor-paced event that is popular in Japan and other countries and was first contested at the world championships in 1980.

Qualifying heats include 6-9 cyclists to get the eight-man, four-lap final.

Nothstein covered the last 200 metres in 11.270 seconds. He said his tactic was to stay in front throughout the last lap.

"It paid off, but I was very tired in the last metres and at one moment I was afraid that Hubner could overtake me," Nothstein said.

"I hope my wins will boost popularity of track races in the states. It's good to give this sport publicity before the Olympics (in Atlanta in 1996)." The strongly-built world champion, who played American football, baseball and wrestling before devoting full-time to cycling, planned to rush home early Sunday

to share his joy and his medals with my family and my villagers.

"I also want to rest my foot and enjoy hunting and fishing at home," he said. He will also look around for some lucrative contracts.

Nothstein succeeds Australian Gary Weiland, who won both the sprint and keirin titles in 1993.

The Australian did not start in sprint because of an injury to his left knee and was eliminated in the second round of keirin Saturday night.

"Honestly I thought of winning a medal when I arrived here. I got two golds, two rainbow jerseys. It's fantastic," Nothstein said.

His victory Saturday improved the U.S. medals total to two golds, two silvers and one bronze, putting the American team in third place, behind France and



American Marty Nothstein Saturday jubilated from the podium after winning the gold medal of the Keirin race at the World Track Cycling Championships (AFP photo)

Germany in the overall standings.

The French team, shut out on the final day, still held the lead in the track championships with three gold and two silver medals.

Germany was runnerup with 2-2-2.

Earlier Saturday, Swiss Bruno Risi won the men's individual points race and Carsten Podlesch of Germany beat Austrian Roland Konigshofer for gold in the motor-paced event.

Podlesch's title was the last for motor-paced which will be eliminated out, along with tandem and the 100-kilometre team time trial in 1995.

Risi, 25, from Erstfeld, captured Switzerland's only gold at the championships for his second world title in three years.

He finished with 35 points in the 100-lap event, winning six of the 20 sprints.

Denmark's Jan Bo Petersen was second with 18 points. Franz Stocker of Austria earned the bronze with 14 points.

Australian Stuart O'Grady finished fourth with 29 points (CQ), one lap behind the winner.

Road events begin Sunday with the men's 100-kilometre and the women's 50-kilometre team trials. The championships will conclude

with the men's professional road race at Agrigento on Aug. 28.

The quartet of defending champion Italy is the clear favourite in the men's team trial.

Russia, led by Valentina Polhanova, is the team to beat in the women's event, which will be contested by only six teams.

The course of both races runs through a section of the Palermo-Capaci highway — the scene of the May 1992 murder of anti-mafia Judge Giovanni Falcone.

Falcone, his wife and three police officers were killed by a powerful bomb as they drove to Palermo.

Riley stuns Brown

VICTORIA (AFP) — Samantha Riley produced the swim of her life to pull off the biggest upset yet in the Commonwealth swimming pool here on Saturday.

Riley chopped nearly three seconds of her personal best to claim the 200m breaststroke gold and leave 17-year-old world record holder Rebecca Brown trailing in her wake.

Only Brown and American Anita Nall have ever gone faster than Riley's games record of 2:25.53. Brown, who was visibly distraught after testing defeat in her first big competition outside Australia, trailed in 2:30.24 and knows now she faces a real challenge at the world championships in Rome next month.

"I don't know what went wrong," she said tearfully. "I swam a great heat but I must have just tensed up for the final."

A jubilant Riley, who had been shunted out of her role as the star of Australian breaststroke, attributed the dramatic improvement to increased aerobic and longer distance work under the guidance of coach Scott Volkner.

"Obviously I would like to go faster in Rome but I'm not going to start predicting any world records," she said.

Riley's was not the only outstanding effort as the Australian squad scooped five straight golds to go with their five out of six on Friday.

Matthew Dunn had to set a new Commonwealth record to overhaul Canadian hope Curtis Myden in the last ten

metres of the 400m individual medley.

Dunn's time of 4:17.01 shaved four tenths of a second off Canadian Alex Baumann's ten-year old best.

Myden, whose time of 4:17.73 also represented a personal best, was so exhausted by his efforts he nearly fainted after the medal ceremony and had to be stretched out of the area while being given oxygen.

Scott Miller's better-judged finish gave him the 100m butterfly gold by six hundredths of a second Canada's Stephen Clarke, who finished with a half-stroke. The Australian clocked 54.39sec to frustrate the home crowd who had already begun celebrating.

Susan O'Neill, a flop in the 100m freestyle, bounced back 24 hours later to claim her first Commonwealth Games win in the 200m. England's Karen Pickering, weary after winning the 100m gold, had to settle for the bronze.

O'Neill, who finished fifth in the 100m after starting as clear favourite, trailed the Englishwoman by over a metre at the half-way stage.

But she surged back on the third leg, moved ahead at the beginning of the fourth and went on to win in 2:00.86.

Another Australian, Nicole Stevenson, also came past Pickering to take silver.

"Usually I can turn up a gear but I tried to kick in the last 50m and it just was not there," Pickering, who was kept up later than she would have liked by a drugs test on Friday.

Canadian wrestlers face tough opposition

VICTORIA (AFP) — Canada remained in contention here on Saturday for an unprecedented clean sweep of the 10 wrestling gold medals on offer at the 15th Commonwealth Games.

After putting a man in each of the five finals set for Saturday night, the hosts ensured their presence in the semi-finals of the remaining five events. They have not lost a bout in two days of action.

Indian grapplers earned four semi-final places on Saturday and were staring at

tough opposition.

Kirpa Shankar in the 52-kg class, Dharambir Singh in the 62 kg and Sanjay Kumar in the 90 kg joined super heavyweight Jagdish Singh, given a bye into the last four.

Coach S.R. Sanga refused to celebrate, keeping fingers crossed.

"I am happy but there are difficult matches ahead and anything can happen," Sanga said.

Pakistani Fayaz Mohammad completed the Asian presence in the semi-finals

after he beat England's Shane Rigby in one of the day's toughest bouts, in the 74-kg class.

Kirpa Shankar's path into the last four was eased by an injury to his quarter-final opponent, Pakistani Razi Gul, who was trailing on points when he gave up with aching ribs.

Shankar faces Canadian Selwyn Tam, an easy victor over Kenya's Simon Lamach. Tam is a two-time Commonwealth champion known for his lightning on the mat.

Dharambir Singh won both his bouts against Scotsman James Breen and Irishman John O'Rawe, with ease and will wrestle highly-fancied Englishman John Melling for a place in the final.

Sanjay Kumar struggled to beat another Scotsman, Graeme English, a seven-time British champion, in a bout that went into overtime after they were tied 1-1 at the end of five minutes.

Sanjay Kumar's semi-final opponent will be Nigerian Victor Kodei.

Tracy fastest in high-speed practice

LONDON, New Hampshire (R) — Brazil's Emerson Fittipaldi led 12 qualifiers, breaking the track record for Indy cars, at the one mile New Hampshire International Speedway on Saturday.

Driving a Penske-Illmor, the 47-year-old, two time series champion, averaged 175.091 mph.

Raul Boesel, also from Brazil, was second fastest, knocking Britain's Nigel Mansell, who set the record of 169.247mph in 1993, off

the front row for Sunday's 200-lap race in the last minute of the qualifying session. Both drove Lola Ford Cosworth cars.

Official results were delayed while Indycar officials reviewed a question of whether Boesel made more than the two attempts permitted under the rules. Boesel averaged 173.856mph while

Mansell was slightly slower at 173.845mph.

Canada's Paul Tracy completed the second row with a speed of 173.422mph in a Penske-Illmor.

Boesel aborted his first qualifying run when he was unhappy with the handling of the car. On Boesel's second attempt, Indycar officials radioed his team that the track wasn't clear and a caution flag was displayed.

"We had been advised and suggested by Wally (Dallenbach, Indycar's chief steward) that if I wanted to come in again I could. So I took the decision to adjust the car again," said Boesel.

In the closing minutes, Boesel's team presented his car to make what it felt was its second and final attempt. He took this opportunity to turn his fast lap.

This was Fittipaldi's first pole of the year and 16th of his career, earning him one point in the series championship where he trails teammate Al Unser Jr. by 35 points.

"That point was important," he said, adding "the championship is still open."

Mansell, the defending winner here and reigning series champion, felt that the handling of his car changed from the morning practice session to the afternoon qualifying. His Newman-Haas racing team took a gamble and lost.

"We guessed at the setting. I had an incredible push (understeer) and we took the risk of putting more wing in the car," he said.

Mansell didn't appear too upset with losing the front row spot to Boesel, who seemed to get one extra shot at the pole.

Obree takes no risks

PALERMO, Sicily (R) — Graeme Obree of Britain is taking no risks for his next world title quest in the 42 km men's time trial at Catania next Thursday.

He will use normal triathlon bars on his controversial bike instead of triathlon bars of his own design.

Obree changed the stubby bars that suited his downhill skier racing position, replacing them with extended triathlon bars to conform to the rules that outlawed his skier style and cost him the world 4,000 metres pursuit title on Tuesday. He won the seven last year.

"With my bars I did not feel in control. There was less control than there was with my original bike. With the normal triathlon bars it is more stable," he explained.

Obree's 18-inch bars were six or seven inches longer than normal triathlon bars, according to British team manager Sandy Gilchrist.

Obree needed that extra extension because of his long arms. He describes himself as a "human chimpanzee" and his extended reach is 76 inches, four inches more than the average for his height.

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GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMMAM HERSHI
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A THINKING MAN'S DEFENSE

Both vulnerable, East deals.
NORTH
♠ J 10 4
♥ K 9 7 4
♦ K 9 6 2
♣ J 10

WEST EAST
♠ Q 8 6 3 2 ♠ K 9 7 5
♥ 8 6 3 2 ♥ A J 10 5
♦ 7 ♦ 4
♣ 8 5 4 ♣ A K 7 6

SOUTH
♠ A
♥ Q
♦ A Q J 10 8 5 3
♣ Q 9 3 2

The bidding:
East South West North
1♠ 1♥ Pass 2♥
Dbl 3NT Pass Pass
Pass

Opening lead: Three of ♠
Follow the bidding and play of this hand and decide who, if anyone made a critical error. It cropped up in a rubber-bridge game at the League Card Association in New York.

Since West had not yet bid, East's double of two diamonds was for takeout. South reckoned that North-South could make at least eight tricks at a no-trump contract,

since North almost surely held the king of diamonds for the raise to two diamonds and had the advantage that the defense would be working more or less in the dark.

West led the fourth-best spade and declarer called for dummy's jack. East's king lost to the ace and, as the cards lay, declarer could claim nine tricks. South exited with the queen of hearts to East's ace and no matter what suit East chose to return the defenders could not get five tricks before declarer raked in nine.

It might seem that everyone did what they were supposed to do. However, if you look at all four hands you will see that, had East withheld the monarch at the first trick, declarer would not have made more than eight tricks.

But what if declarer held ace and another spade? Then declarer would always be entitled to two spade tricks. Since declarer surely held both the queen of hearts and queen of clubs, the only hope for the defenders was that West had started with five spades to the queen and declarer a bare ace. Had East played low to the first trick declarer would have been forced to cash out to avoid a three-trick set.

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Canadians cheer double gold strike

VICTORIA (AFP) — Canadians fans at the Commonwealth pool, sick of a diet of non-stop Australian swimming success, were finally given something to cheer about with a double gold strike in the diving here on Saturday.

Canada's Jason Napper came from behind to snatch the 1m springboard gold from Australian Michael Murphy with a superb final dive while Anne Montminy led the hosts to a clean sweep in the women's 10m platform.

Napper's inward 2.5 somersaults in the tuck position was one of the two most difficult dives performed during the competition and his execution was good enough to draw marks of 9.0 from the two of the seven judges.

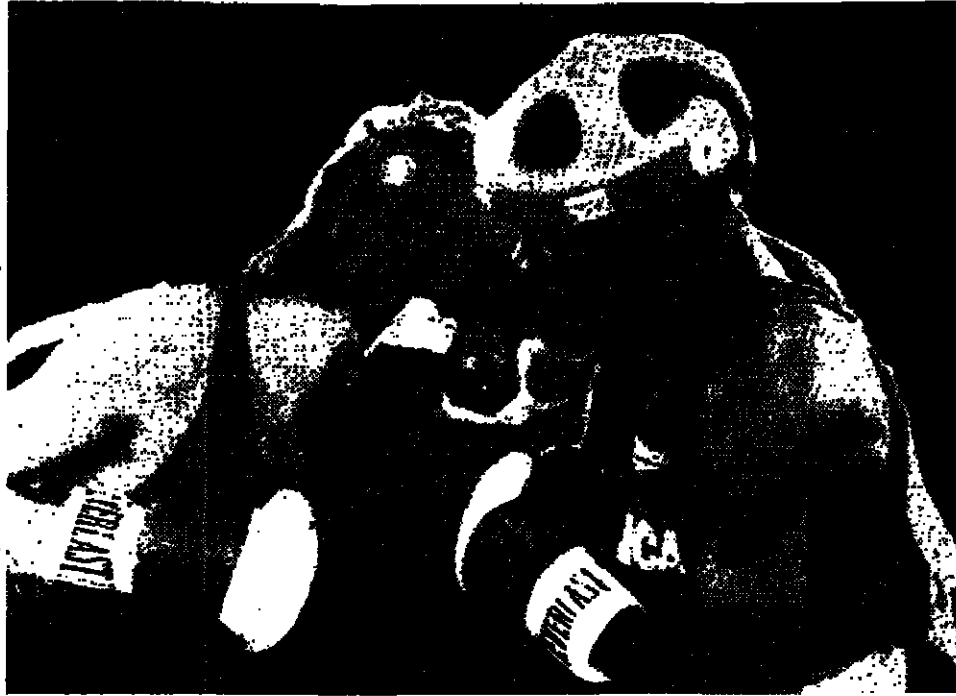
"I knew that six or seven would be good enough for a medal, so I was thinking about just trying to get my head in the water. But the other side of me tapped me on the shoulder and said to go for gold," Napper said.

Evan Stewart won Zimbabwe's first medal of the games when he took the bronze.

Napper now heads for the world championship in Rome believing he is capable of creating a surprise. "If it's my day, watch out," he said.

Montminy took control of her competition with a near perfect fourth dive — 1.5 somersaults with a half twist — that earned her four 9.5's from the judges.

A poor entry on her penultimate dive cut her lead but neither Paige Gordon, who moved from third to second with her 8th and final effort, nor Myrian Boileau were able to take advantage.



Australian Aaron Everett (left) and Masibulele Makepula of South Africa trade punches during their 48 kg preliminary bout at the XV Commonwealth Games in Victoria, British Columbia. Makepula won the bout (AFP photo).

Swan thanks his school bullies

VICTORIA (AFP) — Tiny James Swan, who took up boxing after being picked on at school, thanked his former bullies after a gritty victory at the Commonwealth Games here on Saturday.

Australian Aborigine Swan, just 1.63, beat Indian Devarajan Venkatesh on points in a first-round featherweight contest at the Archie Browning Sports Centre.

The unemployed boxer said: "Basically, I did not thank the bullies for it then, but I do thank them now because it made me tough."

Born in Alice Springs to a 14-year-old mother, Swan was going to be taken into care before his grandparents took him under their wing.

"I'm fighting for the memory of my late grandmother," said Swan. "And my grandfather had a stroke in 1992 and I want him to go to heaven contented — by me winning a medal here."

"I know how seriously I have to take the fighting game — hopefully I will go

back with the gold medal. I have never now."

"It was a real David and Goliath bout — he was so big! But I had the aggression to take the fight up to him. I had to keep moving and keep my punches going up."

The 20-year-old Swan added: "I thought I won it because he kept running backwards and kept covering up on the ropes."

Swan, who has received fan mail from all over Australia, feels he's in the right frame of mind to win the title.

"I'm on a natural high, have a good feeling, and I want to keep it that way," he said.

Swan now faces Guyana's Hugo Lewis for a place in the semi-final.

Venkatesh scored well with body punches, but Swan hit his opponent with a flurry of shots in the final seconds of the first round to lead 3-2.

Venkatesh used his greater reach in the second round to level at 4-4, though Venk-

atesh bowed to Swan in apology when he hit him after the bell.

But Swan concentrated boxing up close and went on to win 7-5 as the Indian tired.

Farce overtook the boxing here when Northern Ireland's featherweight hope Adrian Petterson was forced to enter the ring with the referee, stood in a neutral corner and was even greeted by the bell to start the fight.

Petterson, whose opponent Victor Kgabung of Botswana had scratched earlier on Saturday, climbed into the ring with the referee, stood in a neutral corner and was even greeted by the bell to start the fight.

In the light-flyweight division, South Africa's Masibulele Makepula beat Australia's Aaron Everett on points, and India's Birju Sah ousted Northern Ireland's Colin Moffett.

Zambia's flyweight Bonface Mukuka stopped Sri Lanka's Llandani Kulstunge with 27 seconds to go of the final round in another first-round bout.

Klinsmann makes drama-filled debut in English League

LONDON (R) — Juergen Klinsmann lived up to his pre-season billing as the most sensational recruit to English soccer with the winning goal in Tottenham's dramatic 4-3 victory on the opening day of the Premier League season.

The German striker was one of three foreign players to score on their debuts on Saturday, and justify English clubs' raids into the ranks of this summer's World Cup stars.

Tottenham, audacious in the close-season transfer market, were equally adventurous on the pitch as manager Ossie Ardiles fielded a five-man attacking line-up against Sheffield Wednesday that had his opposite number gasping.

Klinsmann, who scored five World Cup goals, had a hand in setting up two on Saturday, and then secured victory for Tottenham with a diving header in the 82nd minute.

He caused some concern three minutes later when he was felled by a clash of heads, and needed eight stitches in his lip after puncturing it with his teeth.

Ardiles was full of praise for both Klinsmann and his other major signing, Romanian Ilie Dumitrescu, whose attacking thrusts caused Wednesday a host of problems.

"Juergen's contribution was excellent, not only the goal but the chances he made, and that's the sort of football we're going to play this season," said Ardiles, whose side starts with the handicap of a six-point deficit imposed for financial irregularities.

"I think Ilie will capture



Manchester United winger Andrei Kanchelskis (left) is dispossessed by Queen's Park Rangers' Andrew Impey at Old Trafford (AFP photo).

the imagination of the British public," added Ardiles. "He's still not 100 per cent fit, but he showed today that he's a very exciting player."

Wednesday boss Trevor Francis praised Ardiles' bravery in selecting five attacking players. "When I looked at the line-up I thought it was the most adventurous I've ever come across in management," he said.

"I knew that we would have problems playing against players of that calibre but I was hoping that from an

have started with a victory, especially playing away from home. It's a great start."

If Tottenham's start was great, Liverpool's was outstanding as they slammed six goals past newly-promoted Crystal Palace in a game that recalled memories of their 9-0 destruction of the same opponents in a cup tie five years ago.

"Our defending was horrific," wailed Palace manager Alan Smith. "The goals were going in at will. It was a painful lesson for us and it is going to be a bloody hard season for us."

Veteran striker Ian Rush scored twice, as did young winger Steve McManaman as Liverpool produced the type of attacking football that was sorely missing in a disappointing campaign last season.

Liverpool manager Roy Evans said: "I'm pleased with such a convincing scoreline on the first day. We are capable of beating teams heavily if we keep our consistency."

Manchester United began their quest to become only the fourth side to win the English championship in three successive seasons with a 2-0 win at home to Queen's Park Rangers.

But the two sides were the first to be exposed to the new crackdown by referees on foul play, with each having a player sent off.

Queen's Park Rangers defender Clive Wilson was dismissed after just seven minutes for a professional foul, while United's second-half substitute, defender Paul Parker, was sent off seven minutes after coming on.

Medals no surprise to Sri Lankan shooters

VICTORIA (AFP) — Lakshman Rajasinghe, a lieutenant colonel with the Sri Lankan army, rues the fact that he does not get enough time to practice with the rifle on a shooting range. He is usually busy on the battle-front against Tamil guerrillas fighting for their own homeland in the island's north.

He barely managed to squeeze in an hour's practice daily in the run-up to the Commonwealth Games.

But that did not prevent the 39-year-old army officer, in combination with navy captain D.H. Chandrasiri, from springing a huge surprise at the Games Saturday by shooting down a team silver medal in the standard-bore rifle event.

He said he and his partner,

who also is involved in combat operations, were not too disappointed that they missed the gold, which went to the New Zealand pair of Lindsay Arthur and Stephen Peterson, because the Sri Lankan shooters made up for their lapse.

"We feel great, really overjoyed," Rajasinghe said, after waking up his wife Shanzee back home in Sri Lanka with a telephone call to tell her the news. "She was overjoyed too, told me to be happy and not be disappointed at missing the gold."

It may have been a surprise to everybody else here, but the Sri Lankans had been confident they would put up a good shooting show.

The women's gold and men's silver medals — the Indian Ocean island's first in

the Commonwealth Games since 1950 — were not a flash in the pan, Rajasinghe said. "Before we left Colombo, the secretary of defence gave us a party and we promised him we would bring back a medal," Rajasinghe said.

"We hold a good record in the South Asian Federation Games and we thought we had a good chance here."

Chandrasiri scored 591

points and Rajasinghe 586 for a combined total of 1,177, four points behind the New Zealand pair.

"Had I performed as well as I am capable of we would have the gold," Rajasinghe said.

He developed his interest in shooting after watching his father, a former army major, at work with a rifle.

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